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THE BIBLE OF LIFE,

BEING AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

OF

Minister Keshub Chunder Sen's

“ JIVANA-VEDA ”

OR

SPIRITUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY,

BY

V. RAI, D.L.

A.D. 1928,

Bráhma Era 100.

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TO
ALL STRIVERS AFTER SPIRITUAL PROGRESS,
TO WHATEVER NATION OR RELIGION
THEY MAY BELONG,
THIS ENGLISH TRANSLATION
OF
Minister Keshub Chunder Sen's
SPIRITUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY
IS
LOVINGLY AND PRAYERFULLY
DEDICATED.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

The sixteen chapters of this book are an unabridged translation of the sixteen Bengali sermons which Keshub Chunder Sen preached in course of his public worship at the Bharatavarshiya Brahma Mandir between July and December 1882, and in which he unfolded his spiritual progress from the very beginning of his religious life. They were taken down by one of his disciples who wrote a fast hand, but had not the advantage of any revision by him. For, Keshub was in bad health in 1883 ; his biographer calls it the disastrous year ; and he passed away in January, 1884. When the sermons were first published in book-form, there were in it many errors and the last chapter was wanting. Even in its last edition, the fifth, errors yet remain to be corrected. In my translation I have corrected them, and have also supplied a word here and there which was clearly omitted. Apparently there were also sentences omitted. These could not be supplied by the translator. The careful reader will, however, be in no difficulty in finding the continuity of thought.

Keshub is, up to now, the highest water-mark of the Universal Religion of the Bra'hma Samaj ; and it may be safely predicted that his "Jivana-Veda" will occupy a permanent and honored place in the religious literature of the world.

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THE BIBLE OF LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

PRAYER.

Many days ago, the excellence of Life as a Bible was preached from this pulpit. Life surpasses all other books ; and the life of a man of faith and seeker of piety exceedeth all. Of all things, a man's own life is the most precious. When the Lord of the Universe hath made the life of man excel the Vedas and the Vedantas, it behoveth every man of faith to narrate the events of his life to the lovers of God. Therefore, by the command of the Supreme Father, I begin to narrate the events of my life. Remembering Him who is the Ruler of the Universe, the Lord of hosts, the Supreme Master, the Great God, and bowing down again and again unto His beautiful feet, I enter upon this pleasant and delightful task.

The first chapter of the Bible of my life relates to prayer. Before any one had come to help me, before I had joined any religious society as its member, before I had examined the various religions and adopted any as my own, before I had associated with the pious and the strivers after piety, in that dawn of my religious life the thought rose and the words sounded within my heart,

"Take to prayer, take to prayer." I knew not what religion was, no one had shewn me the way to any religious society or directed me to any spiritual guide, no one had come forward to lead me through the dangers and perils of the journey, at that time of my life, like the advance rays of sun, the words continually sounded within me, "Take to prayer ; there is no other way but prayer." I did not fully understand why and for what I should pray ; the time to reason had not yet come ; nor had I any one whom I could ask why I should pray. I enquired of no one as to Who bade me pray ; nor did any suspicion rose in my mind that I might be mistaken. I began to pray. While laying the foundation of a palace who busies his mind with thoughts on the future beauty of the superstructure or on the colouring of the exterior ? The whole mind has then to be fixed on the laying of a sure foundation.

"Take to prayer, and thou shalt live ; thy character shall be pure ; thou shalt receive all thou needest." These words floated from the east of my soul to the west, from the north to the south. The thought of prayer filled my mind, the act of prayer filled my days. Prayer is man's spiritual guide ; it is the infinite help of the helpless. This one thing, prayer, I came to know ; this one thing I became acquainted with. None else I knew ; no friend in religion I had. I looked up to heaven, I heard of no dispensation. I understood no principles of religion. I did not deliberate whether I should repair to the Christian church, or to the Mahomedan *masjid*, or to the Hindu temple, or if I should join the Buddhist community. But from the very first I betook myself to prayer which is superior to the Vedas and the Vedantas, to the Koran and the Puranas.

I am a man of faith. I judge and I believe the more. Once I believe, I swerve no more. I judged by sight. "Has this been done aright ?" I asked this to be able to judge ; "Yes, proceed" came the response. I began to practise prayer. I offered one prayer in the morning and another in the evening ; both of which I had committed to

writing. From the dawn of my religious life, I gradually came to the morning and day-light began to grow. The encircling gloom disappeared. And roads, landings and houses became visible. By this practice of prayer I began to gather strength, strength of a lion, invincible, unflagging strength. I found I had no more my old body, no more my old mind. What strength was now in my words, what strength in my resolves ! I had only to speak ; I had only to resolve. I shook my fists at sin and betook myself to prayer. I confronted doubt and unbelief, sin and temptation, with the terrible form of my resolution. I threatened them with prayer, and they were frightened.

I sat at the feet of my God, persisted in my supplications and always got something. I had wants, Who would supply ? I had to go out, Who would show me the way ? Who would drive my sins away ? In all things prayer was my sole resort. It was then my only treasure ; and on it alone I depended. For joy I looked up to it : and for help I sought it. As people say of a man—all his wealth is an only sapphire,—so prayer was my only wealth. I had only this one supreme helper. I knew not what book to read, what subject to reflect upon, what person to go to. If I were not reduced to such straits, I fear I could not have attained such faith in prayer. If any one taxed me, I shut my eyes and said, "Prayer, where art thou ? Come to me at this hour of need." I did not know Bengali well enough to put my prayers in proper language. My words did not express my thoughts. I sat near the window and, with eyes open, uttered a sentence of prayer. Even this brought me abundant joy. In a minute I received a valuable gem. On whom to bestow it ? to whom to speak about it ?

So passed my time in those days. Thus it is that I love prayer so dearly. You are my friends, but prayer is my greater friend. Though unseen, I know it verily to be my friend. Perhaps I am more indebted to it than any of you, for there was a time when I had not a single other friend. I knew that whoso prays hears.

Thus from the beginning the doctrine of inspiration was latent in my mind. What religion should I adopt ? Prayer answered the question. Should I give up secular work and become a missionary ? Prayer gave the decision. What should my relations be with my wife ? Prayer settled the point. What should my connection be with pecuniary affairs ? Prayer laid down the rules. I did not then pay much attention to the doctrine of inspiration. But I knew that whoso prays gets an answer, whoso longs to see is given to see, and whoso yearns to hear is given to hear. Prayer so cleared my intellect that it seemed as if I was just back from the University after studying there logic, sciences and other abstruse subjects for a decade. The Lord told me, "Thou shalt have no books, nor aught else ; betake thou only to prayer." After prayer I waited for an answer. "Thou hast not yet told me if I should give up my secular work" ; "Thou hast not yet shewn me how this work has to be done." Thus I persisted. Gradually I joined the Bráhma Samaj, strove after spiritual life, became a missionary and began to preach ; all these came to pass. I believe in prayer, hence my life is what it is. I believe in prayer, hence I feel that my friends are in a sad plight.

It is imperative that all deceptions in the matter of prayer should be removed from our church. Whoso prays but does not wait for an answer is a deceiver. He whose inner thought and outer words are not the same, who talks more than he means, who does not keep his mind collected during prayer, is a deceiver. The prayerful state of mind is a very difficult one to attain. He who drifts into the current of much talk is a deceiver. Whoso forgets in the evening what he prayed for in the morning, or cannot remember on Tuesday what he prayed for on Sunday, is a deceiver. He who prays for riches or honor or any other worldly boon, or whose prayer is nine parts for spiritual blessings and one part for worldly boons, or ninety-nine parts for the former and one part for the latter, is a deceiver in the

matter of prayer. Experience has taught me that if a man mixes in his prayer a petition for even a worldly penny, his whole prayer becomes infructuous. Therefore keep your prayer pure ; and you shall at last be the heir of this world and the next.

As the result of an addition of one, two, three and four may be proved correct beyond the possibility of any error, so may the result of prayer be proved real beyond the possibility of any doubt. I had not this blessing : I prayed and now I have it. I did not occupy this spiritual place : I prayed and now I occupy it. Therefore I repeatedly tell my friends that when any one of them is in distress on account of illness in his family, or of impending danger, or of poverty, his opportunity for prayer is great. A time of adversity is a great time for prayer. If a man in distress goes cheerfully to the Lord and says "I grieve not, my God ; teach me asceticism, placed as I am," he secures at once blessing for this life and for the next. Pray only for spiritual blessings and you shall receive all things needful. In time of internal discord or of doctrinal disputes the children of God should resort only to prayer. When they have prayed, peace will come of itself. Hence I ask my friends to have recourse only to prayer. They do not, and so they suffer.

I have now narrated to you the first chapter of my life. I learnt how invaluable prayer is ; and I loved it most dearly. May all men learn that prayer is dearer than wife and children, that it is a book of religion, that it is a thing essential for both the secular and the religious life, and may such knowledge induce them to love it most dearly.

CHAPTER II.

PERCEPTION OF SIN.

The lovers of God asked: What is the next chapter? the first was prayer; what is the next chapter of the Bible of Life? Hear, O lovers of God, the second chapter also relates to a very important matter. You will find that in it also, I am very different from other men. My perception of sin is very strong; it is not so strong in many others. My sense of sin was not derived from a deliberation of what sin is and what makes an act sinful. My perception of sin arose from the sight of sin: I perceived it instantly and intuitively. In that state of my mind, no preceptor was needed to awaken in me a sense of sin. I became the strongest witness of my own sins. My heart constantly cried "Thou art a sinner, thou art a sinner." If on waking in the morning my heart said anything, it was "Thou art a sinner." In the morning, in the middle of the day and in the afternoon, at all waking hours of the day and the night, I had a continual perception of sin. In the vocabulary of the world, theft, robbery, dacoity and the like are called sins. In my vocabulary, sin is a distemper, it is a disease, it is a morbid condition, it is weakness, it is the possibility to commit sinful acts. I was not satisfied with confining sin to sinful acts, but I looked upon the possibility to commit sinful acts as a dreadful sin.

I did not coin this meaning of sin. When the light of conscience broke in upon my heart, I beheld in it hundreds and thousands of small things, subtle and gross,—inertness, weakness, worldly attachments and many things else. All lay so concealed that if the light of conscience had not illumined the recesses of the

heart, they would not have been perceived. Just as on rare days the gas-lights of this temple burn bright and brilliant, so did the light of conscience shine bright and brilliant in my heart and I beheld sins everywhere in it. As long as there is the body, there are in it the roots of lust, anger and other sins. But though I say this, I do not accept the doctrine that man is born in sin; what I believe in is that man is born with the possibility of sin.

When bodily propensities are present, roots of sin are also present. I may commit sins. What sins? I may tell a lie; I may steal. How may I steal? If on looking at another's wealth I covet it, if even for a minute I harbour the desire that the wealth may pass on from him to me, then I commit a theft. How may I tell a lie? If my life is in danger, it is possible, though not certain, that I shall tell a lie; or, if I do not tell a direct lie, I may use words which will produce a false impression in the mind of those who hear. How may I tell a lie? I may not in words but in thought. Am I a thief? I may be one, not in act but at heart. Similarly if I consider myself better than I really am, I am guilty of pride. If I nourish the thought that I am a better educated man than you, I commit a sin. If at heart I love myself more than others, if I seek my comfort more than that of others, I am guilty of selfishness.

I see within me various forms of sin, long and tall, wriggling like the worms of hell. I know now that I commit no less than a hundred sins a day. If I count them it will be no exaggeration to say that I have committed a million sins during these forty-four years of my life. My perception of sin is so keen that even the smallest cannot escape immediate detection. This perception of sin causes me suffering. So inexorable is my mind in bearing testimony against myself that it would seem as if it were appointed to count the sins of another man. It is busy counting my sins from morning to evening. Here it is selfishness, here pride, here covetousness, there it is a desire to tell a

lie, then it is cupidity, again self-seeking, and so on. The counting continues ; night follows eve, but the counting ceases not. This counting is not the work of the intellect but of the heart ; and it brings torment with it. It is not reason that alone tells me that it is not right to have so much pride or that it is wrong to be so selfish. The arguments of the rationalist do not impress me strongly. The truth is that the perception of sin is immediately followed by suffering and torment. Just as no sooner does a fly fall anywhere in a large cobweb than the spider perceives and seizes it, so in the nervous system of the soul, if I may so call it, as soon as a sin falls within its meshes the mind perceives and detects it. If anywhere in life is present an anxious thought, a duty unfulfilled, a sin of omission, a virtue rejected or a weakness permitted, the ever-vigilant mind perceives it instantly. And it breaks forth : "What ! are all these lying hidden in darkness ? Then thou mayest become a dacoit. The sight of a thousand pounds excites thy greed ! Such covetousness of another's property !" I may describe the extent of this counting of sins to be like unto a large river, like the sea, like the ocean. In short, there is not a sin that I may not commit.

If the liability to sin does not disappear, sin continues to exist. Hence I do not readily reckon any man to be holy. Hence also no man has yet succeeded in shaming me by calling me a sinner ; nor is it likely that any one ever will. How can you shame a man who counts fifty thousand sins in him and can call each of them by name ? What avails it to accuse a man just returned from a dacoity with the theft of a farthing ? If you do so, he will say "what a trifling accusation !" When a man's own perception sees sin up and down, in every and all regions of his life, it is no strong or violent invective to call him a sinner. If you call me a sinner it may be for teaching a lesson.

My conscience is unrelenting and its cutting-power is terrible. It is keen in discerning sins ; and directly a sin

is committed it sees it and proceeds to cut it off. If in performing an act of pity I overstep the bounds of justice even by a hair's breadth, I have no peace by day or by night. Justice in full measure is ever awake in me. If the payment of the servants' wages is delayed by a day, conscience reproves and says "Thou sinner, guilty of unjust conduct." If I plead "I could not pay to-day but I shall pay to-morrow," conscience rebukes "How couldst thou eat to-day? Thou art rich and takest thy food in comfort; but thou hast not paid thy servants their dues! What terrible injustice!" I leave the city and go to the suburbs; I leave land and take to boat; but conscience follows me persistently. I have to answer its charges; but I have no answer to give. Its summary court is always open within my heart. The burden of sin is heavy on me. You may say "do you commit so many sins? You profess the New Dispensation and yet you have so many sins in you?" Now, it distresses and grieves me that you honour me without seeing and knowing my sins.

But blessed be God, there are few men on earth so happy as I am. The worms of hell are wriggling within me; sins are in my tongue, in my ears and in my eyes. But whereto do they lead? They lead to blessings. If I had not such a perception of sin I could not have come here, I could not have stayed here. My conscious hell is the cause of my conscious heaven. In an unsound body it is not easy to perceive what part is affected or does ache or burn, and the disease is not readily detected; but in a sound body if any part is affected it is immediately perceived. This immediate perception is indeed a good symptom. Because, as soon as I have the perception of sin, prayer rises in my heart and the desire for communion awakes. If I had in me the possibility and the ground of only ten sins, I would, as soon as I vanquished these ten, have considered myself the greatest saint on earth. And I would have considered that as I have become a saint, I have nothing more to do. But now conscience

continually produces in me the perception of new sins and thus opens to me new paths of progress every month, nay, every day. My condition is similar to that of a sick man whose burning body constantly drives him from one lake of cold water to another. I am daily quite as restless as that man because of my sins. Over and above sins, unbelief lurks within me. "Is God present here? Is Jesus living? Shall I see the face of Chaitanya?" As soon as such questionings arise in my mind, some One says "Thou sinner, not see the face of Chaitanya? and he is dancing; Jesus not living?" The rebuke torments me; but the Lord forsaketh me not. He leadeth me from city to city till the City of Peace is reached and I attain peace by entering the Palace of Peace. And then I exclaim in joy,—my torments are at an end. A man, never ill, knows not the value of health; a man who never suffered from poverty cannot know the delights of prosperity. I was being tormented and now I experience the joy of deliverance from torments.

With every tick of the clock some One tells me "Thou hast attained nothing; nothing hast thou attained; no, not the least." As a man whips his horse so does this inner Voice whip me. But the wonder is that though I weep, I rejoice also. As much as I weep, so much do I rejoice. I weep bitterly and I rejoice heartily. If there is a medicine sure to restore health, who would neglect to take it? Hence I always tell my friends "you are sinners, you are indolent, you are offenders." But they behave as if I were repeating the multiplication table to them and pay no attention to my words. You do not feel, my friends, that you are sinners. What I deem a dreadful sin, is only a sin in your estimation; what I deem a sin is only a wrong in your judgment; what I deem a wrong, you reckon only as an unreasonable act. From the expression of your face I can make out that your sins do not torment you. He who is tormented can never remain inactive. How can he remain idle? You con-

sider that once you were sinners ; you are no more sinners ; you are now saints. You pay no attention to the ideal of the New Dispensation. And to many of you salvation is no more than what it is to a Christian or to a Buddhist.

Complete salvation is only found in a constant union with God. I feel I have not got it. The greatest sinner in the Brāhma Samaj is the man who now occupies its pulpit. This is no rhetoric, no poetry, but sober truth. My mind bears testimony to its truth. On earth there are few sinners like me. There is nothing but sin in me. What is a sin to others is a five-fold sin to me. They will be judged by one standard and I shall be judged by another standard. Hence it is that my whole frame trembles when I remember my Judge. When my words are not sweet the inner Judge asks at once "why are not thy words sweet ? Why dost thou not talk in loving sweetness to all ?" When my words lack the least in sweetness I begin to be tormented. I am tormented day and night ; and I continue to be tormented through many days. We are enjoined not only to speak the truth but also to speak in love. If I cast a look of displeasure on any man, I begin to be tormented. Is even casting a look of displeasure a sin ? Yes, to the New Dispensationist it is a grievous sin. Therefore, I tell them who occupy high places in the New Dispensation "purify yourselves of your sins." You say, adultery is a sin. But I say, it is dreadful if a man is attached to women or keeps much of their company. You say, stealing is a sin. I say, it was so even in the days of Moses. Are you much occupied with the thought of money ? how terrible ? Are you yet engaged in the service of the world ? It is a frightful thought ; and are you carrying it in your mind ? Even of the five minutes set apart for contemplation of God you steal a part and think how will you feed your children or how will you earn money ! Are you anxious and taking thought for the morrow ?

May the perception of sin amply grow in us. You

have indeed a knowledge of sin ; you know indeed that virtue is better than sin. But may you have a perception of sin ; and may such perception bring you sorrow, suffering and torment. Our Mother is so merciful that She has joy ready to follow the suffering. If there is quinine in hand, if there is medicine, let fever come if it must. If the perception of sin brings on suffering, the suffering will bring on joy. Where is the pang of sorrow when we know the God of communion and the joy of communion ? Why shall we fear suffering when joy is sure to follow ? Hence I ask no more whether God is more powerful or death. If a million sins are about us, a hundred millions of medicines are in our hands. We shall even now destroy millions of satans. Does a man who has consecrated his life to his Mother fear sins ? Satan has no power over him. Friends, if I have spoken to you of darkness, I have also spoken to you of light. If you have sinned, may you toss in agony ; and when you toss in agony, the Goddess of Peace will come unto you and grant you peace.

CHAPTER III.

BAPTISM WITH FIRE.

The third chapter of my spiritual life relates to the Baptism with Fire. If I ask my soul "in what creed wast thou baptized in thy early life?" it answers "in the creed of fire." From early life I have worshipped the creed of fire; and I have been devoted to it alone. I regard the state of being on fire to be the state of salvation. What is this creed of fire? To know fire and the creed of fire, you have to know coldness and the creed of coldness. Many lives have coldness in them and no fire; many others have fire and no coldness. Many men are cold in character, inactive in mind and inert in body. They have no ardour in work, their movements are slow, their words have no warmth, their hearts no fervour and their eyes no lustre. When these characteristics are present in a life the conclusion is that coldness predominates in it. There are many on earth who practise coldness like the observance of a vow. They walk slowly, they work feebly, and if they have to end any practice they end it slowly. They seek after cold regions and they live in cold regions. They want to practise a cold communion and desire to attain a cold salvation. Even in heaven they hope to live in a cold place in a cold way. If on earth fire and water are placed before them, they avoid fire and enter into water. If heavenly fire and water are offered to them, they look to such water with hope and reverence and long for the day when they will attain it. When coldness prevails, it weakens the character of a man and loosens its fastenings. It robs him of energy and strength, and paralyses his vigour and ardour. Water extinguishes

all his fire; cowardice swallows up his courage; and passivity and abstention drive away, one by one, fervour, zeal and other stimulating faculties of his mind. They who desire nothing but coldness give up all religious activities and prepare themselves to lie in bed. They practise worship without work and take all possible rest and become gradually feebler and feebler. They avoid all places of suffering and hide themselves where they find no disquiet nor cause for fear.

All characteristics contrary to all these belong to fire; and you will find them in lives in which fire predominates. In my life from the beginning up to now the fire of zeal and fervour has been continually burning; not that it has manifested itself in temporary heroics or that it has appeared only spasmodically. In the vocabulary of religion it is written 'heat means life, its contrary death.' If the body is cold, if the least heat cannot be felt in it, physicians conclude that it is a case of death, that the fire of life has been extinct. Similarly, if in religious life there is an utter lack of heat, it is a case of death. For this reason, from my early life I have been devoted to fire. I was baptised with fire, and my heart trembles if I find any coldness in me.

As by touch it may at once be found out if a body is living or dead, so by one look it may be known if a soul is living or not. It may take time to find out if a man is a sinner or not; but it takes no time to find out if he is living or dead. How? By the feel of warmth or coldness. Hence I pray and strive that my soul may ever remain warm and fervid. Fire preserves life, hence I adopt it, embrace it and love it dearly. At the very sight of fire, I become hopeful, joyful, and enthused. When I find a man is losing heat, I feel he will shortly go and drown himself. When I see that after many years of fervour a man is growing cold, I know that he is on his way to sin; and death will presently claim him as its victim. Therefore have I regarded a state of coldness to be a state of unholiness. When any morning I have risen from the bed without a fresh

baptism of fire, I have been filled with the fear of death. To me hell and coldness have been the same. Therefore in my heart and among my companions I have kept the fire of enthusiasm constantly burning. When I had served one body of men, I have longed to serve another ; when I had organised ten bands of men, I have yearned to organise ten others ; when I had worked in one department, I have wanted to work in another ; when I had made the acquaintance of one set of men, I have wished to make the acquaintance of another set ; when I had compiled truths from certain scriptures, my endeavour has been, lest by confining myself to these alone they might grow old, to read other scriptures and collect truths from them. Such is the state of fire. I long for new thoughts, new acquirements, new enjoyments. I always run after the new. The new is always warm, the old always cold.

I have seen godly Bráhmās, young men of mark, lose their zeal for work, their zeal for study and then come to their deaths. Many men were enthusiastic at one time ; they committed no grievous sins but in course of time they got drowned in cold water. Many Bráhmās practised asceticism for a long while ; but as soon as their lives began to grow cold, worldliness came back and levied from them its toll of attachment with interest ; and at last they died of cupidity. I knew many earnest young men ; but no trace can now be found in what department, party or place they have hid themselves. Many were once ardent heroes, but are now so cold that even if you sit close by them, you receive no warmth ; so very cold that not only are they dying themselves but are causing the death of others by infecting them with coldness. I have therefore been always careful that my hands, feet and eyes might never be cold, nor my heart lose its fervour. As soon as I have perceived in myself any coldness or oldness, my duties growing old or my worship growing cold, I have cried unto my God, "Merciful Father, save thy child from this danger." And instantly I have made prepara-

tions for the *Hom* ceremony and begun to pour *ghee* on fire. And calling persistently on the God of fire I have beheld fire floating on the river and the sea, fire blazing on the mountains and even existing in the body of animate beings. And at once new truths have flashed from all sides.

Am I a sinner only when I utter a lie? If my worship is cold and my words discourage or dishearten any of my hearers, then also am I a grievous sinner. For I have not come to pour the poison of coldness on earth. If I lack considerably in thought and efforts, I shall bring ruin not only on myself but on many others. If heat does not abide, ruin will overtake. Therefore I strive to keep my hope and faith strong and my zeal unabating. If I feel coldness coming in, I know that lust, craftiness and hypocrisy are following in its train; and that I shall have to lie on a bed of sin. If on entering the sanctuary I perceive only coldness, I know that the worship of that day will bring on death. If the desire of contemplation of God is absent, and the words of worship come out slow, and I feel inwardly that they are uttered without fervour, I know it is a case of want of heat, a case of death. If I work in office, but without zeal, I know that I am doing work not for my Master, but work that will lead to death. Hence from the first I have loved the creed of fire. I know that among the believers of God there are those who favour quietitude. But, be it a merit or a demerit, I have always loved enthusiasm. It is not in my nature to be inactive. It is almost impossible for me to hide myself away from my companions. With fire I have filled myself from head to foot; full of fire I have served, laboured, and practised communion. I have experienced God-vision also in solitude; and I have engaged myself in all sorts of business. But I have not fallen into the well of coldness so as to lose my life. And I rejoice in my heart at this good fortune of mine.

The cold are timid and they run away even after practising religion for a number of years. Coldness is such a

frightful thing that it totally puts out fire. If you want to find out whether you are cold or warm, you have only to consider if you are active in work and fervid at heart. If you find that you have no more the desire to make fresh efforts, if you take no more pleasure in your work and are no more eager to join your friends in *sankirtan*, call in the physician at once for you are about to die. You love God ; how then can your contemplation of God lack in fervour and zeal ? How can your religious activities want in ardour ? It must never be so. May your tongue never utter a word of cold despair. As the heat of the several limbs proves the existence of physical life, so does the heat of work, thought, hope, faith, speech and vow give evidence of the existence of religious life. There should be so much heat in you that, as soon as I touch you, heat might flow from your fingers to mine. A man of eighty should possess so much energy that his words might instantly enthuse millions of men ; and those who approach him might say, "He is eighty years old, and yet his energy shows no sign of abatement." In such a state should every one of you preserve his energy and zeal, fervour and enthusiasm. Let us call upon the Bestower of enthusiasm, the Giver of life. Let us call upon the God of fire with enthusiasm. May our tongue utter only Fire, Fire, Fire ; and may our heart constantly practise the creed of fire.

Infinite Mercy, God of fire, worldliness has dug many wells on earth and lies in wait. At the first opportunity it seizes men and drowns them. Mother divine, so long as we have enthusiasm in the soul, we are Thine. But if worldliness throws us into its wells, we lose all enthusiasm and are unable to practise devotion ; and then coldness begins its work of destruction. God of love, grant us more energy in speech, deed and thought that we may not fall untimely into the jaws of the death of coldness. It is my supreme good fortune that I have continued to call Thee Mother, and that two big fires burn on either side of me. Thou didst in early life baptize me with fire and therefore

have I been able to worship Thee in disease and sorrow, danger and peril, able to dance with my friends and companions and sing Thy praise. Many men came, much hope did they raise, but most of them are gone. If Thou didst not baptize me with fire, I would have called Thee the Old ; I would not have called Thee the God of the New Dispensation. When Thou didst find that everything was growing old, Thou didst send us the great New Dispensation. When all the rush-lights were going out, Thou didst kindle the huge gas-light. 'Glory, glory be unto Thee' burst forth all Thy worshippers. They had a hundred years added to their lives, and all their fear and despair were gone. And where there was one musical instrument we brought in a hundred, and, O God of the New Dispensation, we began to sing Thy praise. The ways and landings of this country were being deserted ; young men were losing their energy and fervour and even their speech ; many Brähma brothers and sisters were losing their ardour and, leaving the path of religion, were entering into worldliness. In these distressing circumstances, in order to preserve Thy religion, O Infinite Mercy, O Bestower of enthusiasm, Thou didst fill all the ways and landings with fire. Thou didst put such energy into our silent tongues that even in their feebleness they began to pour forth words of fire. Again we beheld Thee in trees and creepers, in the world, in water and so much more in fire. "We are dying, we are dying," so we groaned. But Thou didst not allow us to die or to become old. Thou didst put new energy and new heat into us and we revived. Even without committing any sin we would have died ; without being utter liars and hypocrites we would have died of worldliness. But now what mad enthusiasm of the ascetic may be seen when a *sankirtan* passes through the streets of the City ! Glory, glory be unto Thee. Thou hast given us such an ever-new religion that there is not the least sign of abatement in any one's enthusiasm. I do not believe that any one who follows

the New Dispensation will ever die of want of strength and zeal. In it there is not only no death but there is no coldness whatever. This is not due to my merit or to that of my brothers ; it is solely due to Thy mercy. Our enthusiasm will never abate ; and we shall begin such a dance as will never cease. We call Thee Mother ; this calling Thee Mother will never cease. The body is reduced to ashes and its fire goes out ; but the fire of the heart cannot be put out by any manner of means. If any one can fill his body and mind with Thy fire, he will find that nothing can put that fire out. What a fire hast Thou lit ! the fire of loving devotion, of faith, of love. No one will die if he has this fire. Grant us, O Lord, this blessing that we may always possess this fire and live our days in the happiness of this fire. Initiate us in the eternal vow of enthusiasm. Grant us the enthusiasm that never abates. Enthuse us with fire that we may dance to its tune. Make us dance the dance that never ceases. Kindle in us the fire that never goes out. We pray at Thy feet, Merciful Father vouchsafe unto us this blessing.

CHAPTER IV.

LIFE IN THE WILDERNESS AND ASCETICISM.

The fourth chapter relates to Life in the Wilderness and Asceticism. Entering the world was to me entering the cremation-ground. God had ordained that the path of pleasure would be death unto me ; and so it came to be. The skilful divine Artist Who drew the portrait of my character, first painted the entire ground deep black ; upon it He began to draw pictures in various brilliant colors and still continues so to do. And, because of the deep black background, the colors of the pictures shine all the more.

My religious life began in sorrow, suffering and asceticism. From the very first a cloud of asceticism floated in the sky of my life. I gave up eating fish when I was fourteen, though religious life first quickened when I was eighteen. Who led me to give up fish ? Who told me that animal food was forbidden ? One guide I knew ; him I used to obey ; I called him Conscience. He spoke a word to this boy ; and the boy gave up fish. Thus asceticism began in my fourteenth year. As I grew in religious sentiments, began to worship and pray, and found refuge in God and my religious fervour increased, this cloud, which looked only like a finger in the sky of my life and which exhausted itself in the giving up of fish, spread and became black and thick. It became so black and thick that it saddened my heart and darkened my face ; and I found no peace by day, nor in bed at night. All sorts of youthful enjoyments I eschewed as poison. To worldly pleasure I said, "thou art Satan ; thou art sin." To self-indulgence I said, "thou art hell ; whoso resorts to thee falls into

the jaws of death." To my body I said "thou art the way to hell; I will subjugate thee, else thou wilt lead me to death." I had no knowledge of religion then. But I knew it was sinful to be worldly, it was sinful to be uxorious. I remembered men who had died on earth; many had died of self-indulgence. So the words sounded from within: "Be not worldly; sell not thyself to worldliness; moral stain and sin are big topics; for the present, give up worldly pleasure; many begin with pleasure and gradually fall into hell." I became afraid of the world. So soon as any worldly thought rose in my mind, I felt that a messenger arrived from hell. The world looked frightful to me, and wife became an object of terror. The world seemed to be just like a poison-cup, handsome without and deadly within. I was always afraid that wheresoever I might plant my foot in the world there would be thorns and monsters and dire diseases lurking underneath. My smiling face became gloomy. My mind said: "If you smile, you will sin; to smile is to sin." And smile bade me farewell. Some of my friends noticed the change but did not understand it. I resolved to avoid everything that might excite a smile and to keep away from friends and books that were likely to induce me to smile. Gradually I became reticent; I spoke little. I paid not the least heed to amusements and comforts.

I felt no desire for the forest or for the yellow robe. And I went to no forest; I put on no yellow robe. Nor did I adopt any artificial means to mortify the body; I felt no such desire. No thought of resorting to external signs of asceticism entered into my mind. But I regarded the house where I lived and the room which I occupied to be my wilderness and my cremation-ground. I considered the noise of the inmates of the house to be verily the howlings of the wild beasts of the wilderness; and wherever I found vile conduct and vile practice I looked upon them as verily the wild dance of Death on the cremation-ground. True, my wilderness was no forest; but the world itself became my wilderness.

Though I lived in the midst of worldly affluence, I wore very plain clothes. I did not weep but I never smiled. In that mood of mind I rose from the bed in the morning ; and in that mood I went to bed at night. The sun could not make me smile, nor could the moon. Do you know who was at that time my chief friend ? He of the English poets who had best delineated this state of the mind. I used to read his 'Night-Thoughts.' If I found any pleasure in those days, it was by reading that book. I used to engage myself in such occupations as were arduous, as increased the gravity of the mind and kept it away from evil thoughts. When did all this take place ? When I was eighteen, nineteen and twenty. I had married and was to enter the world. But even where I had to set up my earthly home I found the cremation-ground. I had not much knowledge of the world, but I had learnt to fear it. And some one within me began to ask : " Wilt thou seek happiness in worldly enjoyments ? Wilt thou spend thy time in the company of thy wife or in talking about worldly affairs ? Will these things bring thee joy ? " I reflected : " The human soul is a noble thing. Shall I subject it to a wife ? Shall I subject it to the world ? " And I resolved never to do so. For, I knew of many who had died, having subjected themselves to their wives, and of many who had been killed by the bolts of the world. Therefore I forbade the world to touch me. Therefore, likewise, I lived in the world in trepidation. For I was much afraid that I might any day die of worldly attachments, of greed of money. Just as I regarded lust and anger to be frightful, so I looked upon wife, children and the world as dangerous. The fear that I might love them more than I loved God, might prefer the world to Him, led me to regard the world as a terrible monster. For fear that I might fail to attain loving-devotion to God, I loved the darkness of the new moon. I felt no inclination to go to any garden and to amuse ; no prospect of pleasure gladdened my heart. But I used to sit still in a dark place. And now and then I laid an inner

thought before my God. There was no one else to communicate with.

Thus was my life founded on asceticism ; and its form and shape were also moulded by asceticism. What ought to take place in an ascetic life took place in mine. The powers of good and of evil fought in me and the powers of good won the victory. The brothers, conscience and asceticism, ruled in my life and the world was not able to approach it. My religious life began with the mortification of self and the mortification of wife. But what frightened me then have become friends now. The cremation-ground, where I began to set up my earthly home has transformed itself into a garden smiling with fruits and flowers ; and through the middle of it passes the road to God. No vestige remains now that it was once a cremation-ground. I began in sorrow but I ended in happiness. I cannot count myself among those who begin their religious life in smiles and who are fortunate from the commencement. Oh the number of tribulations that I had to pass through ! "Unless thou turnest thyself into a corpse, thou wilt not attain divine life." This was the law that the Lord applied to me. I sowed in tears, but I have been gathering the harvest in joy. I had to weep bitterly ; but I have been rejoicing mightily, for I have attained the feet of God.

The law applied to me cannot however be the law for every one. Each man must follow the law applied to him. But one law that I have learnt applies to all. If a new truth has to be established, something valuable to be bequeathed, a momentous event to be brought forth, the throes of childbirth have to be endured. If you want to bequeath something valuable, to become a missionary or to take the vow of devoting your life to the good of the world, you have to retire for some time to the wilderness. If you want to be born again, you must take the mendicant's staff and go about, even if it be for a short while. We ought to appropriate to ourselves the benefit of the rule which the Hindus prescribe for the ceremony of initiation (*Upanayan*). If you want to be a twice-born,

if you want to find yourself in the hands of the Lord, you shall have to kill the beast that lurks within you, to drive out the evil propensities of your heart. You will have to shed, for some time, tears of agony ; the bones of your heart will crack and crush ; but at length you shall obtain a wonderful spiritual body. If you want to live for ever, you shall have once to die. You shall have to suffer the sorrows and torments of Jesus, of Buddha, of Chaitanya, and to come out victorious. But if you are content with merely ordinary work you may practise some asceticism for a short time like an ordinary Hindu, Muslim or Christian. Do not enter life before you have practised asceticism and suffered its sorrows. But if you have already entered it, come out, practise asceticism and then re-enter. If you do not practise asceticism in this life, you shall have to practise it in the life to come. If you have never wept, you cannot laugh the right laugh. If you have not experienced the darkness of the new moon, you cannot appreciate the brilliance and splendour of the full moon. Glory be unto the merciful God, the joyous flowers of loving devotion have now bloomed in the garden of my life.

From my experience I have learnt never to lose heart on account of a sorrow or a suffering. It comes as the herald of a coming joy. It is natural that asceticism should precede joy. I never wanted an artificial asceticism, never strove for a laboured one, never smeared my body with ashes to beget one. But I followed the inborn bent of my heart and adopted natural, spontaneous asceticism. And that did me good. When a black cloud appears in the sky, we know it will rain. I proved this scientific truth every time the cloud of asceticism overspread my life. Asceticism always took possession of my heart just before a new dispensation was to come, a new truth was to be revealed or a new discipline made known. The throes are the harbinger of the sure birth of a fair child. "Cook your own food," "go barefooted," "live in such a place for a few days." Such commands are not given for bodily suffering ; for no

good results from the suffering of the body. What is the test of true asceticism ? That is no cloud of true asceticism which is not followed by a shower. Forsake asceticism that is for show. Conceal asceticism within and let your outward appearance continue the same as before. If refined people call such conduct hypocrisy, know, that born-ascetics like me approve of it. By the command of God, for the propagation of religion I live in refined society and conform to its rules. But at heart I have become one with the family of ascetics. I have found my ancestors in their race.

Among us asceticism is not sought for the affliction of the body ; but it appears spontaneously. What little of refinement and outward polish you find in me has been retained for the sake of the society in which I move to do my appointed work. By command of the New Dispensation the heart has put on the tiger skin ; but there has been no need to wear it on the body. It is always good not to wear symbols of asceticism on the body. My brother, take hold of the asceticism of the heart and love it dearly for the sake of religion. Many in the Bráhma Samaj have been benefited by it. In the New Dispensation many practices of asceticism have been revealed and adopted. Through asceticism the soul puts on the beauty of the regenerate life. If sorrow has to be suffered in the beginning, the joy that follows abides for ever. For the weeping of to-day, there will be more abundant rejoicing to-morrow. If the face is clouded now, it is sure to shine afterwards and glorify asceticism.

Friend of the poor, Refuge of the needy, every man has to follow the law Thou layest down for him. When in early life I was initiated in the creed of asceticism I knew that my life was not for smiles but that tribulations would at times come upon it. But Thou didst never withhold Thy favor. Thou didst not in wrath break the bruised reed. Thou didst not kill the diseased body and mind. Thou dost administer bitter drugs but that is only to cure. Clouds overcast the sky but do not

last. After the cloud of asceticism, the sky dances with joy ; the earth also dances with joy and is filled with crops, flowers and fruits. I have found that every time my heart has been heavy, some good fruit has been born. The darkness of the night comes as the messenger of the morning light. God of the poor, whatever Thou bringest about is for our good. None of my many sorrows and sufferings has lasted ; nor has my sadness. Day after day have I been tasting the delights of health, virtue and piety. And I have also experienced the joys of vision. May I never, Lord, be unwilling to take up the sorrows of asceticism. They purify the heart, subdue the appetites, bring on perseverance in vows and improve the life. Come to us, O Lord of the poor ; Thou art the Ascetic of ascetics ; Thou hast given up Thy all. I will give up all my inner attachments and follow the Great Ascetic. How can I any more call asceticism, a source of sorrow ? Whatever asceticism Thou didst allot to me Thou hast now bestowed a larger abundance of joy. As much tears as I shed, so much do I now smile and rejoice embracing my intimate friends. I looked upon wife and children as dreadful but now I sit surrounded by them and rejoice in the joy Thou dost bestow. Methinks I behold heaven on earth. The world is no more the terrible thing it was to me. I did not have to enter the terrible world. Once I passed my days alone in sadness, therefore do I now find this temple full of friends. What a number of friends devoted to Thee hast Thou given me ! If a dance is begun now, how enthusiastically will they dance with uplifted arms. I bestow my joys on them and take their joys to myself. I never dreamt that my wife, friends and relatives will all be helps in my religious life. How could I anticipate that the house I set up in the cremation-ground would be the meeting-place of so many men of heavenly piety. How happy have I been and how much happier shall I be ! I bow to asceticism ; O Founder of Asceticism, I bow unto Thee. Make us happy by leading us into the path of true asceticism. This is our prayer at Thy feet.

CHAPTER V.

INDEPENDENCE.

Independence was one of the chief articles of the creed in which my God initiated me. "My dear child," said He, "never subject thyself to any one ; this is My foremost counsel to thee." From early life I have obeyed this injunction to the best of my abilities, in thought, word and deed. Dependence is a poison on earth ; it is the cause of heaps of hellish agonies. I know not why I have abhorred dependence from my early days. Many are found who put forth their best efforts to cast out lust and anger, to subjugate their evil propensities ; but no one is found who is madly anxious to escape from dependence. The Lord surely had His hidden purpose, and therefore, did He implant this feeling in me, this deep hatred of dependence. I did not reflect on the evil consequences of dependence ; but I looked upon it as a sin, as a source of evil, as an enmity unto God. I concluded that it was so, without any knowledge of its effects ; for it must be admitted that a principle implanted by God acts effectively from the very beginning.

Therefore have I never been able to bend my head yet to any one. I had to suffer on this account ; but I have never forsaken my creed. Unmoved as a rock have I cleaved to independence. I have found that the creed of independence is not a simple creed. A supreme meaning lay hidden in the injunction "never subject thyself to any one." The New Dispensation was to take its birth ; all sorts of errors and false beliefs were to be cast out ; the glory of truth was to be independently established. For all these purposes the sense of

independence was implanted in me from the beginning. Independence was the first word ; and all these things proceeded from it.

But a sentiment of independence produces no results without a firm determination not to submit to any subjection. This independence alone has given with to many important undertakings. I resolved that I would never allow my body or mind to be fettered by the chains of dependence ; never consent to be any man's bondman ; never fall at the feet of any man ; never sell myself to my elders ; never slavishly adore any book ; never join any sect and continually sing its praise. As on one hand I made these resolutions, so on the other I resolved never to be a slave to self-will ; never to be in the bondage of pride ; and never to forsake the mission which it was my duty to receive from my God.

As my sense of independence grew, I discerned idolatry, caste and like evils reigning on all sides ; and I began at once to try to break their chains. The country has been a slave to these evils for centuries and centuries ; and I rose sword in hand to cut asunder its fetters. As soon as I discovered that errors and false beliefs held our fathers and other old relatives in bondage and oppressed our neighbours, I brought out my weapons. I never could endure slavery, nor can now. When I found a man a slave to his desires and his passions, I felt it to be wrong and could by no means retain my patience. My weapons always flashed to cut down servitude. I did not deliberate upon and calculate the amount of evil caused by servitude. It was not after deliberation that I took up weapons against it. In this I recognised the wonderful influence of the great creed implanted in me. Various desires and passions kept my brothers and sisters on earth in bondage ; I was to stand up against all these ; and therefore did my God so educate me that the very sight of servitude stirred me up. When I saw a man a slave to anger, my wrath was aroused against anger. I could not tolerate even

the bondage of a father or of a son. Whenever I saw a man a slave to riches or to honour, or to sectarianism, my blood coursed swifter in my veins.

God gave man independence ; and man went and sold it in the market of the world ; and now he screams piteously under the tyranny of sin. Different men sell themselves to different passions and persons according to their inclination. And so much do they hanker after slavery, that they continue in chains for many, many years. Servitude to a particular woman is called lewdness ; that to a man, slavery ; that to riches, greed. But all these are different kinds of sin. To be a slave is to sin. When passion rules the world, it goes to ruin. Wherever I go, to a village or to a house, anger comes up and says, "see how many bondmen and bondwomen I have" ; greed comes up, and says, "see what a number of slaves I own and how many big princes have I in my chains." The spirit of servitude has entered into all and has been utterly consuming them. My God, independence is salvation and servitude hell. We must unfurl the banner of independence and reduce to dust the strongholds of servitude. We must save ourselves from all kinds of sectarianism. Men came and advised me ; "Submit thyself to a guru," "Submit thyself to thy parents." My mind said it was afraid. "Submit thyself to friends whom a common religion has united to thee," my soul said it was sore afraid. "Consent with pleasure to submit thyself to those who are devoted to thee and are thy comrades in work and worship." My mind said it was afraid of dependence. I would not be bound to any friend by over-fondness. My intimate friends saw that though I loved them, I was not fettered to them. And they said "this man has not much love for us ; he does not follow our advice but sets up an inner court of his own judgment." My friends asked me to do a thing but I did it not. I would not do even a good deed on another's good advice. I obey only the commands of God. What I do not on the advice of others, I zealously do when God commands. I begin no

work till I have the command of God. Such a determination may be a source of danger to others ; but I have been fortunate ; it has brought me to no danger but has always been profitable to me. I have grieved my friends, but I have not subjected myself to my wife. I have never fettered myself by over-fondness to my children or to my country ; and I never shall. No one will be able to prove that I have ever subjected myself to any man living or dead, or been fettered to any by over-fondness.

Independence has always been most dear to me ; but I have never cared for independence void of the love of God. I did not buy the self-will founded on pride that is sold in the market of the world. I did not seek independence in order to secure for myself a high station or to exalt myself. That sort of a thing is self-will leading to hell. I do not call it independence. I have loved but have not been fettered ; this is true love. I have loved you but have not subjected myself to you. If I had subjected myself to men, my church would have now numbered hundreds and thousands. If, again, I had wanted to subject men to me by over-fondness, my church would have been a very large crowd. But I made independence the captatin of my church. Hence I call my associates friends ; I never call myself their guru. Independence will triumph. I say again and again Truth will triumph. Independence will call and if, at its call men join my church, let them join ; but I will never set myself up as a guru. I abhor dependence ; and what I abhor in myself, shall I not abhor in others as well ? I can not tolerate dependence in even the least of my church. I can not endure to see one man in subjection to another. It is most insufferable to me that any man would subject himself to me. If I allow any man to subject himself to me, what answer shall I make to my Father ? Shall I force my tenets on others ? Shall I govern others by my rules ? Shall I try to enchant men with over-fondness, draw them to my church and keep them there under my subjection ? If I

do any such thing; heaven will kick me out and hell will swallow me. Even if I fail to form a party, even if not a single man be left to me, I shall have no one in my subjection, just as I am in no one's subjection. Do any of you remember that I was ever a slave? When I have never been a slave myself why should any of you be? If a man, who has never allowed himself to be a slave, should endeavour to make slaves of others or should take pleasure in seeing them slaves, there could be none to equal him in sinful hypocrisy. I have never been a guru; I have never tried to make slaves of others. I have always taught; which means that I have always been a learner—always ready to learn. If there have been fifty men in my church, each has been of a different mind. Truth is my witness, the sun and moon are my witnesses, there has been no subjection in my church. If a hundred men have joined my church, each has been his own master. Every one of them has to admit this while I am on earth; every one of them shall have to admit this when I am gone. No one of my church has his life in subjection; but every one has it in independence. I never desire to grind any man in my mill, but I want to see every one independent. I have taught no one to call any man his guru or master but to look upon God as the only Guru and Master. If any one who loves subjection has fraudulently obtained admission into my church, I will send the hypocrite out: I will certainly do so. There is no place for such a man in my church. When he, on whom has rested the responsibility of the church has been independent, when he has always hated dependence, no member of it will ever be a dependent. Every member of it has work for which he alone is responsible; every one has his own mission.

I shall not blindly follow even an unexceptionable doctrine. I shall not be a blind leader of the blind. You ask: independence is a great principle, but, carried so far, does it not border on self-will? No, this is perfect independence; it leads to no self-will. I did not

subject myself to my earthly parents, because I subjected myself to my Divine Parent. Therefore I went so far as to take the vow of independence even in matters of religion. For, many who overcame subjection to the world, sold themselves to their friends in the Bráhma Samaj. Others, who did not become worms of the world, regarded a particular book as infallible and became its slave. I have kept myself away from such subjection. Why should I regard a particular book infallible ? why take refuge in a particular man ? I glorify the adorable Jesus ; I highly revere Chaitanya. But I do not take them as ideals of my life. Call me proud, if you wish, even call me wicked if you like ; but I have never regarded any man as the ideal of my life and never shall. No man can be man's perfect ideal. God alone is man's perfect ideal. He revealeth by His own light heights which even the light of Jesus does not reach. No book contains the whole of wisdom and I have taken none as my guide. Who has so dearly loved the sons of God as I have ? Yet I say that I will not dishonor my Father by taking the sons as my ideal. I will not dishonor my God in my admiration of the Bible or the Puranas. I shall abide with my God and will not subject myself to any one in heaven or on earth. The tiger-skin and the *Ektara* are dear to me ; but if I be over-fond of them, they will be my gods. I take them only for temporary use. I use them during the hours of worship, and when the worship is over I care for them no more. I shall be no slave to any external practice or rite. Some of you know of instances when a man overcame the greed of money, but succumbed to the fondness of the tiger-skin. Hence my soul has always been on its guard against all sorts of over-fondness,—over-fondness of flowers, of the yellow robe, of the tiger-skin or of anything else. So long as I have use of a thing I use it ; and then I say, farewell to thee *khole*, farewell yellow robe, farewell tiger skin. Why shall I keep on a thing of which I have no further use ? I use a thing not to serve it but that it may serve me.

When it has served its purpose, it must go. If there is over-fondness for anything whatever, even if it be a religious rite, the measure of the fondness is the measure of the hell-fire burning within.

In the New Dispensation every man has full independence. Who is the guru? Which is the Bráhma Samaj? Who belongs to my church? I am not attached to anything or anybody. I care only for the substance. I am ready to give up, if need be, all sorts of names; but I can by no means give up the substance. This is why I could not agree with any one. I have suffered, but I have also rejoiced much. I might increase the number of my followers, if I consent to be a guru; but to do so is impossible for me. May the Lord so bless me and my brothers that we may preserve independence fully established in us. Will our number increase in this way? The desirable increase will come only in this way. And flowers from heaven will shower on the independent souls; and they will all abide with the Lord and will never subject themselves to self-will. Array all sins, errors and false beliefs on one side and the frightful self-will, vanity and pride on the other, and then hurl the weapon of independence on both. We subject ourselves wholly to our God and therefore we are wholly independent.

Merciful Father, Free Person, how wonderful is the great creed of independence. When Thou hast in Thy mercy initiated me in this creed, do Thou, for my good and the good of my brothers and sisters, increase in us the spirit of independence. The torments of our sins are intolerable; over and above are the chains of evil customs, vile tastes and errors; and still further, the burden of various attachments lies heavy on our shoulders. I weep, O God, at the thought that they might purchase me and keep me in thralldom. My Mother, we ought to serve Thee alone. But what are we doing? We are serving the world and coming to our deaths. An unbearable burden of servitude weighs upon our shoulders and our minds. Dependence has been killing men all

around us. Bestower of independence, Where art Thou at this juncture ? Why are men suffering so much ? Let war be proclaimed against the spirit of dependence. And do Thou, Mother Almighty, with the thunder of Thy voice put all the enemies to rout. We will no more be slaves of the world. Fountain of joy, we will no more walk in the path of sin, no more serve evil propensities. Mother, we will do what Thou biddest us do, go where Thou biddest us go, eat what Thou biddest us eat, abstain from eating what Thou forbiddest, and never be the slave to any evil habit. What pangs of the heart do we feel when conscience upbraids and says, "You disobey such a loving Mother ! You fail to listen to Her ! You insult Her !" We understand now what a terrible hell servitude is. Save us, Mother, save Thy sinful children. Break our iron fetters, that I and my brothers and sisters may all fly like free birds, fly freely in the garden of heaven ; and eat the fruits of heaven. May we no more live in the prison of dependence. May the free birds of the sky fly in the sky. Gracious God, have mercy on us, bless us that we may make right use of independence and thereby attain happiness. Father, unto Thee I pray for this blessing.

CHAPTER VI.

THE VOICE OF GOD.

When another person speaks within a man, ordinary people call that other person a ghost. They say that he alone, who is possessed with a ghost, hears words within him and without. From the dawn of my religious life I have very frequently heard such words within myself and without. But I have never believed that they came from any ghost, and I never shall. This is another peculiar feature of my life. That another person dwells in man, another tongue in his tongue, may be ascertained by the clear perception of two distinct voices. I have had such perceptions on many occasions and under diverse circumstances. Men talk with other men and deliberate, and from deliberation they derive their religious knowledge. But in my case it was not after deliberation that I took to the path of religion: and this I have admitted again and again. I clearly perceive within me another Person Who is separate from me and Who calls me 'Thou'. It is according to His words that I have always wanted to practise religion.

I have repeatedly perceived and verified the truth that another Person speaks within me. I know there are men who do not hear the Inner Voice. Many are of opinion that a continued hearing of such words begets superstition, the words are spoken by ghosts, and harm comes to him who listens to them. Others are of opinion that men who hear such words should be classed with mad men. Such opinions are current not only in this country but in all countries. When a man says there is another person within him, people hold a meeting and vote him mad. If this is

madness, I would wish to be affected by it. For, it is the madness of religion, the madness of salvation. I do not call them the words of a ghost; but I call them the words of God. Never could I in the least distrust the words. As often as I heard the words, I perceived the clear voice of an Invisible Living Person, and was convinced that the words did not proceed from a friend, a parent, a wife or a child, or from my own self, nor were they truths learnt formerly from a book, or a recollection of the past re-appearing in memory, nor were they words which the goddess of imagination painted in fine colors on the canvass of my mind. But I knew that in those words the Lord commanded me to desist from a sin, to begin a good deed, to start a new work or to travel to a new place; commanded me to demolish some evil or strike against some injurious custom. The thought never crossed my mind that it was I who on reflection came to these decisions, or of his own choice engaged in these pursuits.

He alone, Who hath made the human nature what it is, knoweth what feelings arise in his mind, who hears such words within himself. I devised plans, made efforts and adopted means; but I failed to banish this voice. "I am a big man: I know, I do, I understand: I avoid the paths of suffering: I shall be remembered by thousands for my good deeds." Such thoughts and hopes rise in the hearts of many persons. Others, however, distinguish; and they admit, "I did many things according to the measure of my knowledge and wisdom; but these other deeds and thoughts were not mine: for I felt that another Person spoke within me." Just as I have my thoughts and feelings, so hath He; just as I have my decisions, so hath He. One is the human-soul, the other the Supreme Soul. They are separate. There is one noun but two adjectives. To the noun soul are added two different adjectives, human and Supreme. The human speaks in the soul and the Supreme also speaks in the soul: and the common tongue tastes the flavour of both the man

and the Supreme. This perception of two persons, many people have to acquire by practice. If we constantly remember that all good things come from God, and all evil words, motives and counsels and all ignorance proceed from me ; that whatever tends to blessedness comes from God and whatever tends to misery proceeds from me ; that health and happiness are His gifts and illness and weakness spring from me ; if we so remember and cultivate the practice according to the rules of the mental science, we shall take all the shame for the evils to ourselves and give all the glory for the good things unto God. While to many this perception of two persons is an acquired feeling and an acquired knowledge, to others it is natural and spontaneous. Two birds are always sitting together on the same tree, they are much of the same color and their voices also are similar. There is similarity and also dis-similarity. They, in whom this perception of the two persons is natural and spontaneous, hear the Divine Voice frequently. Like the thunder clap that you now hear, the Voice of God sometimes roareth, and then it tosseth the heart.

Men of weak understanding vacillate in their judgment. Now they judge that the truth, just revealed, is in response to their prayers ; and again they conclude that it is the result of perusal of books and exercise of their understanding. Now they judge that because of their prayers God vouchsafeth this knowledge ; and again they conclude that they are not at all indebted to God for it. When a man strives after and attains humility, he is able to perceive that the higher truths are not the acquisition of his understanding, nor the higher sentiments the product of his imagination. When faith is strong, and the two voices are clearly discerned, then follow good results. I plainly perceive what words are His and what words are mine. My inclination says : "Drink wine ; enjoy the pleasures of self-indulgence." Another Voice says : "Follow My path ; thou mayst then have to wear rags, and even to renounce all ; yet I say that only thus wilt

thou attain blessings." My judgment says, "the ascetic life is hard to live." The other Judgment saith, "It will not do to follow thy judgment; when I so command, the path of darkness is the best for thee: thou shalt have to follow it though thou encounterest a thousand demons of death on the way."

I have had many experiences of this kind in my life. When my own understanding has anticipated poverty, disease, reproach and insult, only one Person hath said, "Have no fear"; and my mind hath not heeded any other counsel. How can the human understanding penetrate into the dark future and decide which is its right path? "Even now is the beginning of my sorrow; I may have to live for forty years more; shall I, with open eyes, obey the commands of a ghost and walk in the path of darkness?" I was unable to entertain even the least doubt of this kind. The words of the One Person was so sweet and so trustworthy that I obeyed them. I judged that my own counsel was bad, and that of my good friends unwise; and I trusted the inner Whisper, and said: "Live or die, I will cleave unto Thy feet." On this account I had repeatedly to separate myself from my friends, to suffer much sorrow and even to leave my own people.

Once I come to light, again the Lord biddeth me back to darkness. My God warned me saying: "If ever thou thinkest it is a ghost, thou diest." And I believed that the words proceeded not from a ghost but from the Invisible God, from Him Who dwelleth in union with man. The more I practised communion, and studied mental science, the more was I convinced that the house man occupies is a two storied one; he lives below and God liveth above; that two birds inhabit the tree in which he dwells, a little bird, the man soul and a big bird, the Supreme Soul. And I found that the belief I held from my early days was not unreasonable. If what is called the tongue of man is cut, two parts are seen; One uttereth the Vedas and the Vedantas, the other utters counsels of death; the gross tongue speaks

of vain things, the subtle Tongue utters "my God, my God." If his ears are deaf, a man hears "money, money", instead of "my God, my God". If you try, you will hear the sweet words of the subtle Tongue. I can not say how strong could their faith be, who have not heard the Voice of God. I can however assure them, who are suffering for failure in their efforts to hear It, that their sorrows will come to an end.

It is not possible now for any man to laugh away my faith in the Voice. It is of twenty years' growth ; and I do not believe that it is possible for any man to shake it. The belief that there are two voices can never be eradicated from the mind. Who does not wish to exalt himself by thinking "It is I who acquire learning, earn money, and decide religious questions ?" But One dwelleth within, in whose presence this I becomes only a servant ; before that Ocean this I is only a little pond or a pool ; beside that Great Sun, this I is only a rushlight ; beside that extensive Palace this I is only a tiny room. How then can I think myself great ? I say, "I will now go and earn money." Directly the other Person says, "take care, go not." A thousand men say : "Do this not ; even good men will shun you ; no end of insults will be heaped on you." But the inner Voice commands to do it in solemn whispers. People spread the net of delusion all round me and put on me heavy stones of evil counsel ; but these can not silence the whisper. I hear the Voice by day ; It stirreth me up at night. The heaviness of my soul increases ; and I am in sore distress. I want to go to the left, but It directs me to the right ; I want to seek pleasure and prosperity, It says 'no' ; I ask for light, It gives me darkness. Continually doth the Inner Voice talk to me. The Appellate Court is always open ; It never closeth. I have either to recognize that God speaketh within ; or I have to suffer the torments of seven hundred ghosts, have to give up all hopes of peace and happiness, and be tortured by the ghosts pulling me in different directions and tearing away the flesh from my body. Shall a learned

man like me obey this Person within? Shall I give up the wisdom of all the scriptures and obey only the words of this Person? So wise a man as Socrates used to hear the words of the Inner Voice, and, in spite of all his learning, used to follow Its counsel instead of his own.

This divine Voice may not be called the voice of a man's own understanding. If you call it so, you will deceive yourself. My conclusion has been different; and, if the whole universe perisheth, I shall not give up my faith in the Inner Person. I did not base my faith on considerations of consequences. Faith does not depend on such considerations. If some men have gone astray by following this path, that is no reason why I should abandon it. Some men have counterfeited coins; it cannot be that therefore I should relinquish all coins. Should the living also die, because some have died? When I see two persons, myself and my God, the words of one of whom evince ignorance and immorality and the words of the Other constitute the scriptures of the world, why should I consider the two to be one and the same? Why should I misappropriate the glory of God, or ascribe my misdeeds to Him? You may argue that a man may take advantage of this doctrine and proclaim his own words to be those of God. You may say, "O man, when you want a good meal, you will say that God hath told you to take one. In short you will put into the mouth of God words which will justify all your evil deeds and desires." But I cannot give up my faith, because some men may turn out deceivers. During these twenty years, often have I heard His words and on many different subjects. I have never once been deluded. I have never once repented of my faith. I feel that the human soul and the Supreme Soul are mixed up together in one and the same cup. I do not believe that God the Creator dwelleth high up in the sky, and I the creature live alone here on earth. On the contrary I believe that His hands are within my hands, His

tongue within my tongue, and the breath of His eternal life within my life. Believing this I try, when my tongue moves, to find out whether the other Tongue is also moving along with it. If the tongue of this sinner alone moves, I want to cut it out ; and I beseech the divine Tongue to put forth Its utterances.

I reject the opinion of those who call this doctrine a mere fancy. I have not the least doubt about its truth. If I had, I would not preach it from the pulpit. When two tongues are clearly perceived, what will you say about them ? Will you say they are one and the same ; that God and man are one and the same ? But, there are the two separate courts. The decision of the lower court is repeatedly set aside by the Higher Court. Even while you talk about the decision of the lower court, the Higher Court upsets it in all its details. Hence I am a dualist. I see two judges ; one Soul guiding the other soul. When I talk, my words are spiritually uttered, and not by the piece of flesh called tongue. So also the words of God are spiritually uttered, and not by the piece of flesh. The voice of God is not like the sound of iron or brass wires, nor like the murmur of the brook or the warble of the bird. Yet they are wondrous and exceeding sweet. That ear knows it which the Lord endoweth with power. May I have a firmer faith in the words of God ; and may you all follow the path of faith and attain blessedness.

Friend of the poor, Inner Soul, I know not in what region of my soul art Thou hidden. My ears hear a new Veda, a new Scripture, being read within me ; but I see Him not, Who readeth. A Supreme Judge passeth judgment within me, but the Court-house I see not. From inside my bones, Thou makest Thyself known only by Thy voice. Thou speakest from within the darkness of my soul. As a man is frightened by a voice heard in a deserted house, so am I often frightened by Thy voice within me. I hear a Voice in a dark alley of my heart, and I wonder who could it

be. Who forbiddeth me to follow my inclinations ? It is none but my God. Thou revealest Thyself in the tree, in the sun and the moon and also in moral science. I believe in that mental science which says that Thou art present in the economy of nature, present in the moral law and keepeth man alive to that law. If I ever fail to see Thee in nature and become indifferent, Thy voice does not allow me to go to sleep. As soon as I think of doing what is wrong, It giveth me a push. Whether I am in my room, or in my garden, or out of my house, the divine Voice clingeth to my ears. If the ear be cut off, that Voice will still be heard. Even when the body is burnt to ashes, that Fire does not go out. Such is Thy voice as if the mighty torrents of a thousand streams are united into one, and the joint torrent falls on a rock. Never can I forget Thy voice. Never can I say that Thy voice and my voice are the same. Thy words are so sweet that never did they hurt me. Never could I say that Thy words deluded Thy servant into a wrong course. Every word of Thine which I have been able to catch hath been an infallible truth. Never have I mistaken my fancy for Thy words ; nor have I had ever to repent. Whenever I have caught Thy words, I have caught them correctly. When I have become Thy worshipper, and have attained Thee and seen Thee, why shall I fear man or fear fancy ? For twenty years has Thy servant carried on this business, and never has he incurred any loss but has always made a profit. Blessed was the moment when I trusted Thy voice ; for I have been able to stock much treasure during these years. My Mother, bless all who have taken refuge in Thee that they may also take refuge in Thy words. I have learnt what joy Thy words bring to a man whom every one has forsaken, and what peace flows into his heart. With folded hands, therefore, do I pray to Thee, O my Mother, that I may always shun my evil sentiments and the evil counsels of other men and pay heed only to Thy words. May people only enquire what Thou

sayest. Let earthly pulpits be silent. Whisper to me, Mother, from within and from without. Thy words are sweet honey to me ; other persons' words are so bitter. Speak to us always. May we, Merciful Mother, follow Thy words, and thus destroy sin and gather peace and purity. Grant us this blessing, for we are very poor.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ACQUISITION OF *BHAKTI* OR LOVING-DEVOTION.

Fellow worshippers, the gospel of my life is a gospel of hope. Many of its incidents inspire hope and incite courage. For, I was not born endowed with all the qualities that I now possess. When you hear of a new virtue acquired by striving, when you know verified facts regarding its acquisition by effort and dependence on the grace of God, your heart can not but be filled with hope. There was a side of my life, weak, defective and dark : and a knowledge, that it has mended, will kindle hope in the hearts of even the most despairing. Therefore, listen with attention. In early life I had no loving-devotion (*bhakti*) to God, nor had I much love for God, but only a moderate affection. What I had were faith, conscience and asceticism. It will help memory, if you remember that their (Bengali) names all begin with a V : *Visvas* (faith), *Vivek* (conscience) and *Vairagya* (asceticism). With these three I began to walk in my religious life ; and gradually other virtues, that were needed, came in ; and in fulness of time I gathered the harvest with joy. Faith, conscience and asceticism are, all of them, dry and austere ; though they are excellent qualities and are of no small value in religious life. Sometimes even these are rare. Fortunately I had these three from the very beginning. "I should be a good man ; My faith should be firm ; Sternly should I subjugate my propensities ; I should forsake my all for God." These were the thoughts that used to occupy my mind. Conscience and asceticism rendered most effective help.

I knew from early life that "conscience and asceticism are the two helpers in the practice of religion."

How could loving-devotion grow in a life which was so stern at the beginning? In early life I did not even look for it. Nay, I did not even know that it was so essential to religious life. I did not understand what 'the lotus feet of the Mother' could mean. I prayed to the King of conscience; I desired to abide with the God of sinners and transgressors, with the God of ascetics and hermits. I used to see how a man of faith lived, who wholly depended on God; but I had no knowledge of how a man lived, who was lovingly-devoted to God. The burning rays of the sun shone in my sky, but not the soothing beams of the moon. I felt that conscience consumed all the dross of my heart and highly illumined it. I challenged sin to enter into me if it dared. My heart was so full of blazing fire that I defied temptation. But I had not the joy born of loving-devotion to God. I possessed what a virtuous man, who has subjugated his evil propensities, possesses. That was satisfaction and contentment, but no joy. No joy is found except in the worship of the Joyful Mother. You may find satisfaction when you bow down in fear unto the God of conscience; but you will find joy only when you worship with loving-devotion the Joyful Mother. If any of you now find only satisfaction in your worship but no joy, to him I hold out hope and say: "Despair not, brother, despair not; if you have begun your religious life in fear, you will mature it in loving-devotion and joy; if you spend to-day in hard labor to build up a pure character, you will find the flowers of loving-devotion blossom in you to-morrow."

I had no expectation to be classed among the joyous worshippers. In some places respected friends gave me the title of *Brahmananda* (Rejoicer in God). But my heart did not respond, and said that I was not worthy of the title. Possessed with the spirit of austerity, I continually told myself: "Give up this; give up that; give up, give up; subjugate the pro-

pensities ; put forth energy ; propagate non-idolatrous religion " I did not hope for the nectar of peace, the nectar of loving-devotion. I did not know how to look up to the Mother. I called only upon the Father. The door of the Mother's inner mansion had not opened to me ; nor did any one shew me the way that led to it. When I heard the words "Like a mother, God preserveth us," I took them as only a figure of speech. Loving-devotion had not swelled up in my heart ; the name of Mother did not madden it ; seldom did I shed tears ; my heart had little poetry in it. It is wonderful how subsequently I built the temple of the Mother. In those days, conscience predominated in my life ; and so it did in the lives of almost all the Bráhmas. One man's character reproduced and manifested itself in many others. It spread to five, to ten and to a hundred young men. The *khol* was yet unknown. We had not learnt to call God by the name of *Hari*. The joyful Mother was not yet seen. The Bráhmas did not yet address God as my Love, my Husband. God was to them only the Father. The tabernacle of the joyful Mother was yet to be raised. No *khol* was played ; not a single *sankirtan* had been composed.

I did not consciously feel these wants ; nor was there any indication that they were felt by any others of the Church. But I and they followed the path of faith, conscience and asceticism. We had only a modicum of love. Soon the sands of the desert began to fly. We could no longer continue to walk the old path. I felt that things were not exactly right ; much time had been spent in following the old way ; but it was no longer possible to do so. I thought it was necessary to bring the *khol* into use. So long as I had no loving-devotion, God revealed Himself to me only through the conscience. But as soon as loving-devotion was born in me, One from within drew in an inexplicable and mysterious way my heart's desire towards the God of the loving-devotee. A change took place, and I discovered that a man might acquire what he did not possess. I have

now attained so much of loving-devotion that I can hardly determine whether I have more of it or more of conscience, greater joy or greater asceticism, more of happiness or more of the austere practice of religion. I did not remain a dry, austere worshipper in the Bráhma Samaj ; but I placed peace and joy by the side of conscience ; and it is now impossible for me to find out which is more abundant. I have now so much of loving-devotion that it would seem as if it was natural to me. I began my religious life drily with the practice of purity ; and I thought of how to attain a good character, how to walk in the path of virtue, how to live the life of a *fakir* renouncing all worldly possessions. But I felt no desire of enjoying the delights of God's company. I have already told you that for a time I spoke little and observed silence.

Many wise men are of opinion that inborn qualities alone unfold, qualities not inborn are never acquired. They say that acquired qualities are a fiction ; one born without loving-devotion never acquires it ; one born without faith never attains it ; loving-devotion may only develop in him who was born endowed with it ; he, who begins religion in fear, ends it also in fear. But if I must speak for myself, I must say that I began my religious life with trembling, but I am now immersed in joy. And what has happened to me will happen to all. In early life I acquired the title of *Brahma-jnani*, a knower of God, on account of my faith ; but now I rejoice in my heart on account of my joy. Then it was sternness, but now it is tenderness. Then it was Father only but now it is Mother also. I have now a fuller realization of God in my life : I perceive the constant dealings of His love in my life. Then we had only one name for God ; but, with a fuller realization of Him, what a large number of names we now use. Oh, how I wish that every one of you may see God in all the beauties in which I have seen. When what was deemed unattainable has been attained by one man, it can surely be attained by all. The man, who used

to weep, sunk in dryness and sternness, now rejoices. This good news should be delivered to all men and every man. My knowledge of God was slender ; it has increased. I used to entreat God with folded hands ; but I have since found that it was He, Who was drawing me nigh unto Him. I have learnt to call God my Mother ; and what various manifestations I now see of Her, and by what various names I call Her ! Now I see Power combined with Joy, and again Wisdom united with Love. My Mother hath revealed Herself to me in many beauties and many more beauties will yet be revealed. Let no one ever say that he has exhausted seeing all Her beauties. For, we have only recently begun to study the science of loving-devotion. The more we grow in loving-devotion, the more beauties of the All-blissful Mother shall we see. And we shall be able to see them in spite of our natural weakness.

Now is our day for acquisition. What we had, has developed : what we have not, has now to be acquired. May to-day's sermon rouse you to efforts towards such acquisition. What I had not, I have attained. Once I had no loving-devotion ; and it was utterly impossible for me to sing hymns ; I never dreamt I could ever sing hymns in the presence of other people. I did not know that I would ever call God my Mother. But now I feel that looking and looking upon my Mother I may go wholly mad. He, who has not called my Mother his Mother, has not yet clearly seen God. He who has not seen my Mother has not attained anything. My Mother will visit every house. I can now emphatically say that She will certainly visit the house of every one of the millions of India's sons. What has happened in one place is bound to happen in every other place. Is it said, There is no love of God in the heart of educated India ; English education has dried it up and no love can grow therein ? Not so ; when my dark days have ended, yours also will end. Bright days will most certainly come. There is hope even for them who utterly lack the love of God. May

my hope and loving-devotion grow from more to more. I am slightly mad now; may I grow madder. May such madness and loving-devotion take hold of me that the world may dislike me much more. May such wonderful feelings rapidly grow in me that the world may abundantly abuse me. Oh, how I wish that I may end my earthly days in possession of such feelings. Oh, the marvel! that loving-devotion replaced such dryness as was in me; and that I was given to see such a Mother.

There were some in whom loving-devotion was born before it did in me. Why did not they bring in the *khol*? Why did not they sing *sankirtans*? Why did not they reveal the temple of the Mother? If one man, noted to have no loving-devotion to God, begins to dance and sing, because he has seen the Mother, it would at once rouse good sense and wisdom in the hearts of those who behold the scene. And they would say, "What, this man speaks of loving-devotion! Is not he the same as travelled from place to place and preached of nothing but conscience? He never took to the path of loving-devotion. How is it that he plays on the *khol*? Then probably God is really coming down to man; and the saying, "God's mercy alone profiteth" is going to be fulfilled." That people might say so and betake themselves to the path of loving-devotion, therefore it was that loving-devotion came into my life. When I was immersed in loving-devotion, I understood that verily God was dealing with me. Old loving-devotees might have given me a hint, but they did not. When time moved on with the repetition of the prayer, "Oh God, save us; Oh, save us; Oh Lord, help us to live;" no one came forward to pray, "Delay not, Oh Lord, to lead us into the path of loving-devotion." Only one Person spoke. He spoke Who was to speak. And the lotus blossomed in the desert; and the flower of love bloomed on the rock. Every thing is possible to prayer. All wants are supplied by it. I have now both the land and the water. I

have now the mountain of faith and the lake of loving-devotion. I have as much of asceticism as of love. My Mother feeds me with asceticism with one hand and with love with the other. She is constantly feeding me with both hands. God hath been glorified; and by expanding the lake of loving-devotion He hath increased our happiness and joy.

Refuge of the lowly, Infinite Mercy, unending is Thy love; marvellous are the dealings of Thy mercy. How terrific was the form in which I first saw Thee; and how beautiful is the joyous Flower that now floats in the lake of my heart. How didst Thou reveal to me this beautiful form? where was It hidden before? through what path did It come to me? I have given my brothers the message of hope. Do Thou now so ordain that they may attain this joy. I paid no attention, by what path through the dry sands, by what mountains and over what villages I was led to the shore of the lake of loving-devotion. Therefore am I unable to bid any one, 'walk in this path and you will attain loving-devotion' or 'play on the *khol* and take to that road, and you will be able to dance." I remember nothing; have no idea, retain no knowledge, of the way. I remember only this that once I had no loving-devotion and now I have it. Time was when I could not call Thee Mother. Now I wonder where did such a Mother, as Thou art, hide Herself? If any one among the Bráhmās is unhappy, the reason is that he has not seen my Mother. If he sees Thee, the night of his unhappiness will pass away. Who amongst you has seen my Joyful Mother? Him I call my comrade; him I embrace; he is my friend; he is the foremost of my companions. My Mother, bring me such friends. No good will come by hypocritically repeating the name of God. No three men now agree. No five men are of the same mind. If they will accept my Mother, then they will be united in deep love. And there will no more be divisions into sects and castes. No quarrel, no estrangement is possible to men who see the same

Mother. Others do not call Her 'Mother' Whom I call so ; others do not seek salvation of Him Whom I call my Saviour. That is the reason of such disputes, sufferings and heart-rendings. Thou dost not dispute, My God ; and those that dance round Thee do not dispute. No quarrel is possible among children in the presence of their Mother. Merciful Mother, can there be any dispute in the kingdom of dance around Thee ? O, when should the day of such dance dawn ! I have given the message of hope. I know not if my friends will strive. So long as men do not see Thee as their Mother, division into sects and sects is inevitable. But I know a time will come, may be millions of years hence, when there will no more be any sects. To have to wait for such a length of time, oh ! how sad the thought. Wilt Thou not, oh my Joyful Mother, vouchsafe this boon to Thy helpless child, that we, the few brothers and sisters, who have prepared ourselves to worship Thee in the New Dispensation, may worship Thee only, and worship none else ? I would have wasted my life in gathering dry leaves ; but what has become of me ; I am mad with loving-devotion. Madden me more, my Mother. India will be mad ; the world will be mad ; and before I die I shall see the earth quake and quiver with loving-devotion. I do not so much rejoice when I hear that idolatry is decreasing or the number of monotheists increasing. But I do rejoice much when I hear that a man is calling Thee his Mother. I hope all of us will call Thee Mother, and join in the new dance around Thee. What were we, these few brothers ; and what have we now become ! We have now given up all shyness, and have now attained that loving-devotion which knows no quiet, but is bold, wild and maddening. We know not what we shall be in the future. As our dance, so is our drama. No one can anticipate what will follow. My Mother, may all of us fix our eyes on the Same Person. We do not want a number of gods. The world will never be happy if it worships

a thousand or several thousands of doctrine-made gods. Stand Thou, our One Mother, in our midst and let all India dance around Thee. Infinite Mercy, may we become mad by dancing and dancing in loving-devotion around Thee. Helper of the helpless, grant us this boon in Thy mercy.

CHAPTER VIII.

SHYNESS AND FEAR.

When I have told you of the weak side of my life, I ought also to tell you of the feelings which have contended with their opposites in my life. I have told you of the want that was in me, and how it was removed by the grace of God. Now, hear of the two feelings that contended in my life; but know that a compromise of the disputes took place in due time and I have since been enjoying peace. For a long time I was under the dominion of shyness and fear. Like other enemies they made their assaults; and the assaults have not yet ceased. I did not willingly or with pleasure accept them as masters. They are the enemies of the pious and the good. Their toils are broken in the same way as those of other enemies. But whether it be from want of adequate efforts or from natural weakness they are still in me. I can not get rid of them though I try. I meet them in every turn and feel that I am in their power. Shyness and fear have now limited spheres. The Lord hath removed them from me in the sphere of religion but hath allowed them to remain in the sphere of the world. When gradually He added to my religious powers, and conscience became strong, and worship and prayer increased my loving-devotion to Him, and faith grew in fervour, I then felt that there was no religious denomination which I need fear. In the very morning of my religious life I learnt by the grace of God that man is of no great value. In the domain of religion, my shyness and fear decreased in proportion as my faith increased. But in the worldly plane they still continue.

When I do not hear the command of God or the call of duty, the old masters drag me near unto them. And then the look of my face changes ; and I become shy and afraid to go into society or to talk to people. The same head, that courageously rises high when it sings the praise of God, hangs down at other times in the presence of the most ordinary man. Perhaps I was born with a natural weakness, a shy disposition. Every time I am shy and fearful, I feel miserable. Whom do I fear ? I fear even the coolies of the street, even them who are called the vulgar and the ignorant. When I see an assembly of learned men, I fear to go in among them. My mind says, "Learned men are being honored in this assembly ; you are not fit to come in here." I hear no inward command that the power of learning is here and ignorance must not enter. But such has become my nature that I desire of myself to keep in the background in an assembly of the learned. I have the same kind of feeling in a gathering of those who are very rich, who are highly honored in society or who live in the height of their prosperity. My nature shrinks of itself at the very sight of the bright robes of rank and wealth. I do not naturally want to visit such people. I can not and do not easily approach three classes of men, the rich, the honoured and the learned. I approach them only when duty bids me do so. So also, I speak in public only when duty commands. But when I hear no such command, persuade myself as I may, my hands become numb, my feet fail and my eyes close of themselves. When I find myself in such a gathering I feel that I was not born to be there. And I exclaim within myself "Oh, where have I come !" If I have to speak there, I fear I shall make mistakes in grammar. I lack the strength to come away ; the brightness of my appearance goes out, my face darkens and my head hangs down. The only thought that occupies my mind is—when will this meeting disperse, when shall I go back to my humble friends and mix with my familiar companions, when shall I go home and enjoy its natural

freedom? This shyness brings misery with it. I deliberate, "these are only men and I am a man too; if I make a mistake will they not excuse me because they have wealth, rank and learning? Can they take my life? Will they insult me and drive me out by the neck? Perhaps some of them may drive me out; the learned may say 'you have not much education, you are not fit for this company of the learned; you may deliver sermons, but you have no right to come in where nought but learning is honored'." It is not that I have never gone to such assemblies, nor that I have gone only on rare occasions. Everytime I have gone, I have been treated with respect. But perhaps this time it will be different. Such shyness and fear overtake me that I feel as if my life is in danger.

If no one is near, I am afraid to sit alone in my own room. I hardly consider it right to entertain the thought of travelling unattended. When I have to do a work, I wish to do it conjointly with others. When I have to go anywhere, I wish to go in company with others. Some one within says, "Go not alone out in the world; go not alone to the gatherings of men of rank and wealth". Who says so? Is it the voice of God? No, it is not His Voice. It is my own nature that says so. My nature says that a man like me must not go out anywhere alone; it is not right for one like me to do so. My nature does not want to be alone but wants to be with my own people. When alone, I feel myself helpless and unprotected, whether it be in my native country or in a foreign land. I have seen my friends go alone to various places, go alone even in the dark. But this man, who has been given so much courage in religious matters, is afraid under certain kinds of danger and cannot face them alone.

What fear has he who hath faith in his God? In the godless sphere of the world he has as much to fear as a small child before a tiger. Here enemies surround ready to spring on him; and so he has to fear. When the conversation is not on religious

subjects or the business has no connection with religion, then only shyness and fear come to me. Where anything connected with worship is concerned, fear departs from me though there is ground for tenfold fear. Elsewhere, however, though I repeatedly say, "begone shyness, begone fear," they leave me not.

When I see a number of men approaching me, I feel inclined to run away. I cannot say, "how do you do?" I can not look up to them. If they do not begin the conversation, it becomes worse; I feel like taking to flight and hiding myself behind some rocks. When big men of the world come to see me, and many do, I think whether I may not leave the place. Even when my brethren come to see me, I am not able to welcome them. Some of them go away judging me proud. They call me proud and puffed up with the conceit of religiousness and lose no time to calumniate me. When arguments are put forward I am convinced that I am wrong. But nature, though washed, does not change its color. I fear that this natural weakness will not wholly disappear. It may decrease, but is not likely to leave me altogether. At times I doubt if its total disappearance will do me any good. For, I can not associate with worldly men; I can not unite with them. I want no friends except friends in religion.

I have earned the reputation of being a proud, vain, conceited man. But what shall I do? If you scan me while I sit in a gathering of men, you will say that this man wants to run away. If any one proposes shopping to me I want to take to flight. If the world stares me in the face, its color changes. If it persists in staring at me, my inner color will also change. If any one addresses a few hard words to me, I am no more myself; I begin to sweat, my body becomes numb, and I feel as if death is about to overtake me. Sometimes I have thought within myself why do not these visitors leave; but I could not speak out. Occasionally men have come and spoken severely to me; but I have sat dumb as a child. When I have to talk to a few men, Indian

or European, I prefer to have some people along with me. A man so shy and timid should not go out alone into the walks of the world. Therefore a trusted friend is a necessity to me, one who will always stay with me and protect me. I am fully convinced that in the realm of religion I must always be in the bosom of my God, and in the domain of the world I should always be under the protection of a friend or a guardian. I have wished that in the world a friend might always speak for me.

While in the affairs of the world I am so shy and timid, in matters of religion I roar as a lion. There I fear no man ; there I have never conceded the least point for the sake of any man and I never shall. When religion bids me throw off all shyness, I can dance. But, if it be a worldly dance, I am not able to take a step, even if I try for a decade. In worship I shall dance such a dance that people will call me a low vulgar fellow. Let them do so. I am prepared to be so called. I have done many things with an utter lack of all shyness, done them one after another, done them in the street, by the river and in all kinds of places. When my Mother commands, all my shyness and fear vanish. If then they vanish not, they are enemies and must be cut down to pieces. In preaching religious truths which meet with opposition I cast off all shyness and fear, and preach them in the face of big men and big princes. Elsewhere I am timid, and I know not why. One, who is a lion in one sphere, is a lamb in another. At times and places I am extremely shy and fearful ; at other times and places I am wholly void of shyness and am exceedingly courageous.

Friend of the poor in spirit, Shoreless Ocean of mercy, no man understands his conduct in whom Thou workest, not even he himself. When I am under the power of shyness and fear, I know not which way to turn. Why do I fear the world so much ? So many men speak ill of me and accuse me. Thou seest that they count me as an exceeding conceited man. Wouldst

Thou not guard the good name and reputation of Thy dependant ? Will he, who wholly depends on Thee, be considered conceited ? Thou knowest it is not conceit nor pride, but it is shyness. Thou knowest to what straits I am reduced when among worldly men, and what inertness comes upon me. I can not describe my condition, but such shyness and fear overtake me that, try as I may, I can not utter a word. I have now told my brothers and friends of my two weaknesses. I am not here to justify myself. Men may speak ill or well of me as they choose. It is not to influence their verdict that I narrate the Bible of my life. I have fear and shyness, but, in the presence of men attached to Thee or lovingly-devoted to Thee, they wholly disappear. Or if they do not disappear, it is because I am not well acquainted with the men. Before my own people I am bold as a lion, and I willingly open my heart to them. But as soon as outsiders come in, my tongue becomes numb. Thou knowest my character, Mother ; I seek no praise or reputation. I do not believe my weaknesses are doing any harm. The world is a dreadful place. How can I transact business in its market or shop ? I do not go out there except on a call of duty. Lead me not, my Mother, into the fire of the world. I love only Thy lotus feet and a few friends who are devoted to Thee. Thou hast ordained me a missionary and I have to deal with thousands of men. But when going to many places I tremble, as a goat does when it is being led to the sacrificial post. Thou knowest I am neither clever nor skilful. Thine is all the power, Thine all the glory, that Thou hast enabled so shy a man to dance and so timid a man to be so courageous in religion. And the man, who is by nature shy and timid, now sings Thy praise in a loud and strong voice. My Mother, Thou makest the man shy who is void of all shyness, and again Thou takest away the shyness from him who has it. Thou reducest the strong man of the world to weakness and exaltest the weak man to such strength that others are afraid at the thunder of his voice. O, how hast Thou transformed

Thy poor servant ! He, the shy man, has lost all his shyness in matters of religion. This is a message of great hope. Therefore with folded hands I entreat Thee to abundantly increase the courage of us all. May we never be shy in matters of religion. We have to be shameless in religion. The time has come when we shall walk the streets void of all shyness for the sake of maddening *bhakti*. Now is our opportune moment. If we give way to fear now, the New Dispensation will be ruined. We have begun the dance and must not veil our face. We will not cease to obey the commands of our God for the sake of shyness. We will remain perfectly calm under praise or dispraise, and practise the enjoyment of the lotus feet of our Mother. People will call us shameless and despise us as low. But it is not likely that their opinion will frighten us when we are enjoying such blessedness. I may continue helpless as a child in the world but I will be bold as a lion in the realm of religion. My Mother, my loving Mother, put on me the crown of the kingdom of religion. Living or dying, we have to glorify Thy name. Bless me that I may merge all shyness in loving-devotion and all fear in faith. Little do I heed that I have fear and shyness in the domain of the world. Gracious Mother, bless us in Thy mercy that all our shyness and fear may be drowned in loving-devotion and faith, and that we may so attain purity and joy. O my Mother, vouchsafe unto us this boon in Thy Mercy.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ACQUISITION OF *YOGA* OR UNION WITH GOD.

Union with God (*yoga*) was to me an acquired virtue, just as loving-devotion (*bhakti*) was. In my early religious life I did not seek after union with God. At that time I did not even hear of it ; I knew nothing about it ; I could not define it ; I did not think that I should ever have to walk in its path. To be a man of sterling virtue, a man of unblemished character, and to do the will of God, these, I knew, constituted religion ; these, I considered, to be the duties of a man. What was the need of being united with God ? what was it to be united with God ? these were questions to which I devoted no thought ; nay, my mind did not even travel in that direction. The subject of union with God had not at that time attracted the attention of the Bráhma Samaj. No Bráhma books of those days laid down that it was the duty of a Bráhma to seek after union. Much time had been taken up by the practice of truth, love and asceticism. We had practised them for ten to fifteen years. And then by the grace of God, loving-devotion was born in me ; and gradually it matured into intoxication. While loving-devotion was growing in me, I felt that union with God was essential to make it abiding. The intoxication of loving-devotion might endure for a while ; but without union with God it could never be permanent. If you have faith in God, you must needs be at one with Him. Why should you and He remain separate ? As your heart should be that of loving-devotion, so should your eye be that of union with God.

My mind was drawn to both loving-devotion and

union ; and I began to seek them. I felt that without them spiritual life would be of little use. Directly I exhibited the color of loving-devotion, hundreds and thousands of men were impregnated with its color ; it spread over the Bráhma Samaj. When I attained the red color of loving-devotion, my friends and brothers played on the *khol*, sang *sankirtans*, shed tears of love, were overcome with emotion and attained much loving-devotion. But union was not soon attained. Union is difficult to attain ; its practice is difficult ; its doctrine is difficult ; it is difficult to understand, even for him who attains it. Even now it may be said to be rare. They, who obtain this rare gift, are unable to communicate it to others. Loving-devotion spreads itself rapidly from one to many. But union does not spread itself rapidly. There would in all be only a few men in a century who are united with God. I became greatly attached to union ; but not so the general body of the Bráhmas.

When I felt the want of union in my life, I perceived that without it faith was infructuous, and asceticism, love and devotion were worthless. Without union with God, human life does not fulfil its destiny. Realizing this truth, I resorted to the path of union. Did I adopt this path after reading scriptures, or studying books, or after receiving instructions from preceptors ? No, in none of these ways. I had not then found the subject dealt with in any book. When the science of loving-devotion came to me in the form of the *khol*, no word of man induced me to be initiated in it ; but the grace of God descended on me in the shape of loving-devotion. In the same way the wind blew from where I knew not and brought me union with God. The wind blew from one quarter of the sky and brought me loving-devotion ; it blew from another quarter and brought me union. Thus from two remote regions of the sky two currents of wind brought me two precious gifts. And after I had them in possession, I found that the one was called loving-devotion to God and the other, union with God. Loving-devotion sweetens union and union purifies loving-devo-

tion. One is the brother, the other the sister. The one served and firmly established loving-devotion on the foundation of faith ; the other ministered to union and made it sweet. Union with God might have driven me to pantheism, and loving-devotion to superstitions. But in me the garden of loving-devotion flourished on the rock of union. It was no garden of dreams nor of fancy ; for it was firmly established on the solid rock. Loving-devotion and union made a grand union and the grand-union bore its own fruit. I reckoned myself extremely fortunate ; for, in this country many people by practising stern union had fallen into the gulf of disastrous pantheism ; while many others through the intoxication of loving-devotion had fallen into dire superstitions. I was saved from both the perils.

In me loving-devotion was guarded by union. The one cleared my vision, the other made my heart overflow. One of my eyes attached itself to union, the other to loving-devotion. And the Lord blessed me mightily. I opened both my eyes ; and I saw with one eye the God of union and with the other the God of loving-devotion ; with one eye I saw in wood and water, in flower and fruit, in air and fire, in the sun and the moon the great reality God ; with the other I realized that He, Whom I saw in all things, was the exceedingly beautiful God of my loving-devotion. He, Whom I at first knew as the Real, was also the Beautiful. The vision of the Real, the Good and the Beautiful brought in joy and purity of life. This combination of union and loving-devotion saved me from many a sin and many a transgression. Where I had formerly seen only wood and water, I now saw not merely them but also God.

I did not practise union much or long. I practised with open eyes. I looked around and I saw God dwelling in every thing, interpenetrated in every thing. I saw Him in water, in mountains and in rocks. I looked at water and there I clearly saw Him floating on the water and sinking in it. In the petals of flowers He sitteth quietly ; as in flowers, so in fruits. When I looked

at the bush I trembled. I saw God looking at me ; I heard Him calling me. I approached and He said, "Come, come nearer." I went very near, and I said, I have found God ; and union was established.

What is this union ? It is to establish such a relation with the Indwelling God that He is seen immediately along with every object that is seen. Wood will no more be mere wood ; the sky will no more be mere sky. But in the wood and the sky will be seen Infinite Intelligence. One Intelligence will be seen shining brilliant in all space ; one Force will be seen actively operating in every object. The effulgent light of Intelligence will be seen spreading over the whole sky, and Love and Joy diffusing coolness on all sides and dispensing peace to every man. Such realisation is not attained by wisdom and understanding. It is not to be had on order, nor by striving. It is the gift of God's mercy. I had it not in my early life. I used at that time to adore, pray and resort to the Purifier of sinners for salvation from sins and for release from their fetters. Then I did not practise union ; I did not perceive the blazing fire of God, shining resplendent on all sides ; nor did I perceive that like the blowing wind He touched my very body. Gradually this perception came to me ; and once I had it I did not let it go.

I felt God near me and I tried to go nearer. I saw Him at a little distance, but I desired to see myself sitting by Him. Thus did my union grow deeper and deeper. Union has its measure ; union in an hour, union in five minutes, union in a moment, union as often as one wishes. Without any guide, without any instruction, I sought after this union ; and I never ceased to seek. So long as I have eyes I must see God in all things ; and in all sounds that I hear I must hear His voice. And so it has come to pass. And now I wonder how could I have lived so long without union.

Now God revealeth Himself to me like a flash of lightning and shineth in my heart. I see Him whenever I wish to see. As a spark flies out whenever a flint is

struck, so in a moment God revealeth Himself in my body, hand, finger and tongue. "Reveal Thyself, O my God, in my finger" and immediately His light shineth in it. "Condescend to come here" and He cometh. I tried my God in various ways and my God stood the tests, and revealed Himself. This union is not possible without loving-devotion. Union full of loving-devotion, sweet union, I would not forego it. I practised with the *Ektara*. Immersed in union I began to sing; loving-devotion swelled up with the song; I rejoiced and in joy I took hold of the feet of my God. And I found that my God was not only the God of loving-devotion, but the God both of union and of loving-devotion. I practised loving-devotion and union jointly. And then one music sounded in my life, a music combined of both. When they both make one music in life; then you attain to the God of joy. Look at me; what I was and what I am. For attaining *yoga* I did not seek after a guru in the hills; I did not read books; I did not regulate the breath. I had not resolved in my young days that I should become united with God or become a loving-devotee. The germ of faith which I had in God developed into union with Him; the scanty love I had for God grew into bold loving-devotion to Him. Formerly I was dry and passed my days in work, in the performance of duties; but gradually I learnt the truths about union. Formerly I shut my eyes and saw darkness; but gradually I found that light might be seen in darkness and that company might be enjoyed in loneliness. God might be drawn out of wood; He might be seen in water and the sky. He showeth Himself to him who calleth upon Him and entreateth Him to reveal Himself. There are hundreds of Bráhmas who are perhaps in the same sad condition in which I was formerly. Perhaps there are many who would ask, "How could God be seen in water and fire? Would not that be pantheism? Could we, with Hafez who thought that God was his beloved, say, Thou art so near, Thou art in the flower, Thou art within my

'bosom ?" I say, yes ; I have had that direct perception. People may now doubt my existence, but they may not doubt my union with God. My God is now bound up with me. Have you not seen God ? No other evidence is necessary. Look at me and that will be sufficient. In me two persons are united into one. It is not possible to admit the one and deny the other. I bring you a message of hope. You also will learn *yoga*. You also will see Him as vividly as you see external objects. We accept no God of the books. We see Him and then accept Him. My friends and brothers, accept no imaginary God, no empty God. Be ye *yogis*, united with God, be ye loving-devotees of God : and all your wants will be supplied. I was formerly only an active worker ; now I walk in the garden of loving-devotion built on the rock of union. I do not know if I have now more of work or more of union, greater strength of conscience or greater joy of loving-devotion with the accompaniment of the *khol*. If I have the fulness of loving-devotion I have also the fulness of union. If I have only a very small fraction of union, I have also only a very small fraction of work. I cannot neglect union because I have loving-devotion. I have combined them both in my life. I, the least among the Bráhmās, now walk in the garden of loving-devotion on the top of the hill of union. My Bráhma friends, your lives are not so mean as mine. When I, though mean, have obtained such riches, it will be no wonder that you, who are rich, will obtain the joys of union and loving-devotion. Let me hold out hope and encouragement to you. Lay hold of the feet of God and be ye united with Him and lovingly-devoted to Him.

Friend of the poor, Lord of union, in my life I have found that wherever there are wants, they are removed. Who foresaw that educated in English schools and imbued with English ideas, I should have to be a *yogi* ? But, Lord, following Thy path I had to be one. I did not even dream of union ; I knew nothing about it. But after I joined the Bráhma Samaj, some One pushed me

on and bade me, "Go and practise union with God." Eternal Father, pushed on repeatedly, deserted by the outer world, I entered into the inner world. O, what a wonderful world I beheld ! As in the outer world, so in the inner, there were cities, houses and mansions. There was also joy in abundance. Why then do not men become *yogis*, united with Thee ? If I had listened to the advice of men, they probably would have told me to withhold the breath, and I would have taken to the path of artificial *yoga*. But, Father, Thou didst intend me for happiness, and so Thou didst save me from this error. And I betook myself to the path of natural *yoga* ; and I found it was as easy to see Thee as to breathe. In the high mountains, in the infinite expanse of the sky, I saw Thee as vividly as I saw objects of the external world ; and I considered myself blessed. And I said to my eye, "Be thou not an atheist that doth not see God" ; and to my ear, "Hear thou the sound, 'I am, I am', and the many other wonderful words of God". Thus with direct perception I began my practice of union with God. I practised only for a short time and I beheld Thee in all things. It was hard to believe that an English-educated young Indian would become a *yogi*. But I found that *yoga* could take its birth within such a civilisation ; and that it grew upon the soil of love and loving-devotion. By logical arguments I established the God Who may be seen. By the help of psychology I tested Him. My God, Thou hast stood all tests. Proclaim, my soul, the victory of God : proclaim, my tongue, His victory ; proclaim that my God has stood all tests. A man, who becomes a theist by the contemplation of the trees and the sky, may afterwards become an atheist. But my God granted me a boon. He said, "Try Me in as many ways as thou chooseth ; I am thine and thou art Mine. I place Myself in thy hands, test Me, take Me to the goldsmith, put Me into fire, steep Me in water, compare Me with what the books say, apply all and every kind of tests." I did test and found that my God stood all kinds of tests. And then I knew, O my

God, that Thou couldst not but be true. Thou glitterest and flashest like the lightning. Who hath seen my God? Himalayas, bear ye testimony to my God. Heavens, shower ye your blossoms. O True God, O Blazing Spirit, I have seen Thee. I have heard Thee speak; Thou speakest. I believe in no God of the atheist; from early life I have been trusting the Real God. Thou art more real than the mountains. Thou mayest be clasped. Thou mayest be seen like fire. One may cross the Pacific from shore to shore, but who will find Thy limit? My God, my God, I am united with Thee; I behold Thee; my soul is immersed in Thee. Speak Thou to every one of us, allow every one of us to take hold of Thee. Avaunt, god of the atheist; avaunt, god of fancy; avaunt, god of dreams. We do not acknowledge such a god. The god of fancy, evaporates if he is blown upon; he cannot stand any tests. Come Thou, my God, my loving God, come Thou, Blazing Fire, blaze in effulgence. Imbue Thou, in a moment, the millions of men of India with faith. My friends and brothers are weeping. Reveal Thyself to them. When Thou hast initiated them in the worship of the Spirit, reveal Thyself to them speedily, that they may attain faith by beholding Thee. I magnify the man of faith, I call him the son of God. I say, his life has fulfilled its destiny who may say "Behold, here is my God." How easy and natural is to see God. There could be no joy without such faith. If I did not attain such faith, what did I do for these twenty years? How worthless is that practice which requires a man to bring in the conviction of God's presence by repeating "God is here," "God is here," as if he is conning a school lesson. A man may easily lay hold of Thee, if he approaches Thee as his Mother. Thou, Treasure of the poor, I have found Thee easily. I had nothing; now I have Thee in my storehouse, in my library and within my bosom. I am now richer than any zemindar, richer than any king. As Thy son, I am the heir of the universe. United with Thee, I have brought the sun, the moon and the stars within my bosom. I have them

within me as the spider has the fly in its web. God and the universe, the universe and God, I have them within me. Blessed am I, blessed are my ancestors, blessed are they who hear these words. Blessed, Lord, blessed art Thou. Thou turnest to *Yogi* him who was not. Infinite Mercy, vouchsafe the boon unto us that we may so put our faith in Thee, the Truth, the Intelligence and the Love, as to taste the joys of union here on earth. Mother of the universe, Bestower of salvation, in Thy mercy, bestow on us this blessing.

CHAPTER X.

THE WONDERFUL ARITHMETIC.

The arithmetic I have followed in life is exceedingly wonderful. I never believed in the arithmetic which rules the world. That arithmetic is different from mine ; and the difference is in fundamentals. Yet the scientific meaning of my arithmetic is intelligible, and can be explained to the satisfaction of the lovers of God. All its rules and processes are exact. But the world does not accept it, and will not accept it for centuries.

The manners and customs of the country, from which I come, are unlike those of this country. As men of this country are partial to their manners and customs, so are the men of my country partial to ours. Every man is partial to his country and home. Every one wishes to magnify his own land. O men, as you are eager to explain to others the manners and customs, usages and practices of your country when you think them commendable, allow me to exercise the same right and zeal to explain to you the manners and customs of my country. I speak of my country ; and I shall not call it a small country. The science accepted by our men is not small ; but it is really great. Believe, at least, that you ought to hear and ponder over it for a reasonable space of time. Our arithmetic surprises people. Ordinary men see errors in it and call them fools and mad men who follow such errors. But their judgment can not silence me. I shall emphatically declare that our arithmetic is surpassingly wonderful ; for, according to it, if you deduct five from three, the remainder is seventeen.

When a man practises religion according to this principle, he always makes a profit and never incurs a loss. It is solely because I followed this arithmetic, that I was able to plant banners of victory in the face of large number of foes. Religious life is founded on this arithmetic. The victories, I obtained, were obtained by following its rules. Whenever I have said that five and three make eight, I have lost. Whenever I have said that if a larger number is deducted from a smaller one, a large remainder is left, I have won. When I felt the necessity of building a house, I at once set to build it. The walls rose high in the air, the house was completed, pictures were hung in the rooms ; and then I laid the foundation. The law of our country, the rule followed by our men, is to lay the foundation last of all.

We call them void of wisdom who first lay the foundation and then begin to build ; and we predict they will not succeed. When we hear a man say, "how can the temple be built, walls raised, and other thing managed, when there is no money in hand," we at once understand that success is not possible for him. When we want a house, we ask the Lord and if He says 'yes,' the house at once rises four storeys high ; and as it rises, money flows in ; and the foundation is laid. Be not anxious before you begin a work, nor after you have completed it. Have no anxiety in the beginning, in the middle or at the end. You do God's work at God's command ; why should you at all be anxious ? A daughter has to be married, five hundred or five thousand rupees are needed. The foolish man of the world is anxious ; how and whence to procure money ? He exercises his brain, he considers and deliberates, deliberates and considers ; years pass and no marriage takes place. He begins in anxiety and continues anxious all along. In our country if a man has to marry a daughter, he only looks up to heaven. He asks 'Lord, is this daughter of Thine to be married ?' The response comes, 'Yes, on the 20th of September, The man of faith goes out equipped with conscience and asceticism. On the

auspicious date the marriage takes place without a hitch. There was neither the bridegroom nor the money ; but the man of faith found both.

In such cases, men of the world are anxious as to how are things going to be accomplished. The Lord knows 'how' ; and the man of faith replies that when the Lord hath said it, it shall be. He finds that there is not a copper in the coffer ; but the Lord commands "five hundred men are to be invited and fed with the best things". He sits down to prayer. On a side of the house, marital music is ready ; preparations are complete to feed a thousand men. The marriage takes place. How is it accomplished ? Men of our country never think of how a thing is accomplished. They only think of the mercies by which it is accomplished. Where seven rupees and ten men are wanted, exactly this amount and these men come and at the exact time. When and what is needed, then and that is supplied. How and by what means, who will tell ? Heaven knows ; the earth can not say. Things are accomplished ; and men of the world again ask how are they accomplished. *Thus* are things accomplished, *thus* do men come.

When it is found that all men praise an act and will applaud if it is entered upon, the man of faith at once knows that it is an evil deed and that it will bring about ruination. The learned will approve, the wise will commend and ordinary men will extol, therefore it must be abandoned. But when my heart says, 'do this', and I look up to Heaven and perceive that the deed is good, though respectable men of the world, the learned and the wise, are opposed to it and will call me mad, then I decide that it must be done. When, in setting about a work there is the fear that men will speak ill of me, nay, will insult me grossly ; no one will come to hear my speeches when I go to preach in distant places ; friends near and dear will forsake me ; my body, mind and intellect will weaken and wear out ; then my mind says it is the right thing. No one approves, therefore it is just the thing to do. For, whatever rouses the enmity

of the world, attracts the amity of God. What the world looks upon with disfavor, God looks upon with favor.

Where the world wants a hundred thousand men, the man of loving-devotion says that three men will easily do the work. Where the man of the world says, this work cannot be done by less than five thousand men, the man of faith says, that if more than five men engage in it, it will be spoilt. The world says that much money and many missionaries and many preachers are needed to propagate a religion. The man of faith says, five will be sufficient, and if twelve men enlist the highest number is reached. Twelve men will do what twelve hundred thousands will not be able to do. If instead of twelve you have thirteen, the work will suffer. Five men can do what five hundred can not. If six men enter upon a work in which only five are necessary, the work will fail. For this reason I endeavour that only a few men stay. It is against the command of God to increase the number of men. Behold ! there sat five men of faith, how are there so many men within this time ? What a wonder ! in only fifty years how could there be so many men ? Did God bring in so many men ? It is only a few men who are pillars of the kingdom of heaven and bear it on their shoulders. It was the invincible twelve that conquered the earth. Therefore a man of our country wishes that only a few may stay. When the minister finds that many are coming in, he raises the spiritual key high, as a musician raises his key. Thousands are reduced to a hundred. So many men yet ? So many in the true path ? He introduces sterner disciplines. Many are disgusted ; many speak ill and go away. When the hundred is reduced to five, heaven showers its flowers on the heads of these five. And the minister says, now we have got the right number. Hundreds are cut and clipped ; and the whole energy of the kingdom of heaven is concentrated in the inner circle of five.

In matters where men of the world have much

anxiety, men of our country have none. Many think that our arithmetic is an imaginary one. But it is not so. I have tested and verified it for twenty-five years, month after month and week after week. Whatever success I have obtained in life has been obtained by not being anxious. When work is commenced after amassing money, it fails. When I had no money and no anxiety, I succeeded. When our arithmetic has been proved true by seen results, why should not every one believe it and praise it? I assure you, you can not save your property by being anxious about it : you can not so save your body, much less your soul. Wherever you go with the Buddhistic extinction of desires (*Nirvana*) in your heart, you succeed. Stand on the perpendicular cliff whence you may slip your feet any moment, stand on the sharp edge of a razor, and establish the kingdom of heaven.

Do you want to start a charity after having a lac of rupees under your feet? No, no; start the charity at once. Rend your cloth, consecrate a thread out of it for the work and ask for money. And with the morrow's sun God will give you as much money as you need. All money is God's. It belongs to His elder sons; it belongs also to His younger sons. If you are a son of God, you can be in no want of money. A drama had to be staged, a widow's tears had to be wiped away, a school had to be started; I found money in my chest, and I knew it was an obstacle in the way of God's mercy. A few days passed and the coffer was empty. Now was the time for the religious drama to be staged and the other works undertaken. The leader says that money is in the bosom of the future. When there is money in the world, men of faith should boldly set about their work. The man, who has ten thousand pounds can not give a few shillings. But he, who has nothing, accomplishes the work.

Every man believes that I am a rich man. I may, just as well, think that I am a millionaire; for I know I have not a single shilling. I have no money, yet I

am rich, for I possess God. Possessing Him, I can accomplish a thousand deeds. I enter boldly upon a work, where men of the world are dismayed. But where they boldly go forward, I hesitate to proceed. When I find an abundance of money, money sufficient to run two schools and found four churches, then I know that poison lurks within. For money produces intoxication in the possessor. I would not touch Satan's money even to build a church. But when I find God's money I bow down to it. A piece of God's money is worth a hundred thousand pieces of the world's money. I find no courage in me till I get God's money.

Let only those, who have been called to it, adopt this method. For, it has its responsibilities and may do harm to others. A man must understand the signs by which God makes His will known, before he follows this method. Many men have been involved in debt by following this method thoughtlessly. They vaunted that there was no cause of anxiety for money; that if they wished they could collect lacs of rupees simply by sending out letters. And they boldly soared high. But they soared high, only to fall and sink. We also soared, but we never fell; on the other hand we gathered additional boldness.

When the coffer is empty, it is possible to increase the number of missionaries tenfold and to feed hundreds of their guests. It is possible, because there is no money. For, if hundreds of guests come, Croesus's wealth is also going to come at the same time. We have only to entreat our God. In this way I have been spending twenty to twenty-five thousand rupees year after year, and I have never incurred any loss. I have opened my shop in the straw-market and carry on my business with a bit of straw between my teeth. And I have never been in want. If a man only resorts to prayer and, with a bit of straw between his teeth, says that he wants to open a school which will cost five hundred rupees a month, I know by the look of his face that he will succeed. How much money may I not

find by only taking a bit of straw between my teeth ? What a monied man cannot accomplish, may easily be accomplished by him who has no money. Who will understand this marvel ? How will a man of learning understand what only a man of faith may ? Whatever you do without any anxiety, whether you enter upon some work, carry on a trade or business, or educate your children, you will succeed ; you will attain both wisdom and prosperity, acquire both learning and wealth.

Men of the world go to work with anxious thought, we go without it. Our men of the New Dispensation are able to establish many monumental institutions without any capital. I needs must cry. "Victory to the New Dispensation". Men of the world are not able to support their own family. We support many families without any anxious thought. Fifty maidens are to be married ; different kinds of medicines have to be procured for a number of sick men ; and physicians are to be called ; we must do all these without any anxious thought. Anxious thought never helped any man. Men of the world are immersed in anxious thought, yet their daughters are not married, their sons secure no living, and their children die of starvation. Shame to the learning of the world. Learning and riches cannot accomplish what prayer does. What the rich and the learned are unable to accomplish, the man of faith will easily do at the command of his Living God. I shall yet further show, and if there is any man of faith in my church he will show, that our arithmetic is infallible. He succeeds who stands in front of fire without anxiety and without fear. He succeeds who has naught to call his own. Seeker after God, place thy right hand in fire and thy left hand in blazing flame, be filled with courage, take a bit of straw between thy teeth, and thus live in the kingdom of heaven.

Infinite Mercy, Compassionate God, if one follows the path Thou layest down, he can prove that Thou art true and Thy arithmetic is true. The learning

of worldly men is not learning but ignorance. The truths attained by following Thy path seem at first to be no truths. But, adorable God, they are truths. As we proceed in Thy path, we come to wonders, come to marvels. Thou has brought us into a kingdom, into which the great heroes of the world were unable to enter. What we have accomplished with half a pice, men of the world can not, with lacs of rupees. We do not worship Thee as we should ; and hence all our wants. If we put on rags, and if like Moses, Jesus and Chaitanya we forsake all for Thy sake, we may prove to the world that a hundred thousand people may be fed with one piece of bread. I believe this with all my soul. Have we any fear that want of money will hinder the propagation of truth ? Mother, endow us with courage. Why will not truth be propagated ? Even now Thy servants will stand ready for the work. India is only a single country and we are five or six men ready for the work. Surely India will be conquered, and truth established in it. If five hundred men had come forward to take up the work, we would have said, " Adorable Lord, why such a multitude of men ? In the beginning twelve men established religion. Teachers and preachers have never exceeded twelve. Have so many men come only to see the show ? Strengthen us, O Lord ; concentrate all strength in a few men." Why should we have any fear now ? The time for fear is past. We have learnt the way to conquer the four quarters of the earth. All lovers of God, who ever attained victory, attained it by prayer and communion. By prayer and communion they attained spiritual wealth. Worldly wealth is worthless. We need only Thee as our wealth. We want to love Thy people. Vouchsafe wisdom unto all thy people of this church. Vouchsafe such wisdom unto them that like birds they may fearlessly soar to the sky and do Thy bidding. Why should we have any fear of the world ? If Thy bidding is carried out fearlessly and with a single eye on Thee, the earth will surely be conquered.

Shame to the warriors' power, shame to the power of the worldly kingdoms, shame to the power of the human arm, shame to the power of earthly riches. The power, that is obtained from God, is invincible power. Strong in such power, we shall cry, 'Victory unto our God, victory be unto our God'; and the upper and the nether worlds will tremble. A few men will conquer the world. Merciful God, my Companion for twenty-five years, in Thy mercy, open the hearts of the friends present here, that they may understand the truths Thou hast taught me, and that no one may ridicule them. We shall follow these truths and thus escape from the attachments of the world. We shall work only in dependence on Thee. We have no more any doubts ; no, nor any wants ; for Thou art ours, and we are Thine. Thou art our All-in-all. When Thou dost help us, riches help, and the world helps ; when Thou dost not help, nothing does. We want to find everything we need, only in Thee. Gracious Father, bless us in Thy mercy so that we may renounce the crooked, intricate arithmetic of the world, and betake ourselves only to prayer to Thee and thus leave great monumental works behind us. In Thy mercy, grant this blessing to Thy humble children.

CHAPTER XI.

SUCCESS.

When I first opened my shop in the Joy-Market of my God, I adopted the rule, never to buy or sell on credit. I bought only to the extent of my capital, and I sold for cash. I have never swerved from this rule. I did not enter into the business relying upon what other people said. I never claimed as mine what was not my very own. I never put my hand to what was not mine by right. What little I possessed, what little I had of love, knowledge and faith, I brought into my business. I had therefore to run it with great circumspection. Gradually the business flourished, and I had a number of customers. It was owing solely to the rule adopted in the beginning, that my business prospered as it did. I never counted on what the scriptures said, or what other men taught. I knew that if I did so, I might get into trouble. I was afraid that if I took on trust the taste of things on the testimony of other people's tongue, I might fall into danger ; and I am still so afraid. I resolved from the beginning to learn at first hand, and to practise what I learnt. I would not accept even asceticism or union with God on the recommendation of other people. I was afraid of what might be hidden within or what might be the ulterior result. I felt it was not right to walk in the dark. I had eyes, ears and hands ; I would see for myself and understand clearly. Had I to decide anything ? my Mother dwelt with me, I would ask Her ; my Guide was in my house, He would explain things ; my Friend was at my right hand, I would seek His help : what money I had in my store I would spend ; when I needed more, my God would supply.

I told myself that when I became a rich merchant I should enlarge my business ; and I went on with it as it was. I spread my goods in the market as best as I could ; but I did not borrow. My God made my small business with small capital the source of abundant prosperity. I never sold to my customers on credit. My transactions with my God were also on the cash system ; and I always expected to receive in cash. The rule, not to sell except for cash, was a God-given rule. I did not adopt it on account of doubt based on greed, nor on account of distrust. In the happy dawn of my life the Lord told me that He maketh all payments in cash and never deferreth any payments to the future ; He payeth in cash huge sums of money. So I believed that I would get whatever I needed and whatever was possible for man to get. I practised the receiving in cash and was a gainer by not living in the hope of getting uncertain riches in the future. I spent the night in prayer and next morning I got the desired riches. You never get what you pray for, if you expect to receive it in some distant future. So I bowed down unto my God and prayed "Lord, Thou didst promise to pay me in cash, therefore pay me now. I shall wait at Thy feet but I shall not go away till Thou payest." Gradually I found that I received everything for which I prayed, for myself, or for my country, or for mankind, or for the whole world.

I heard people say, "you must wait long for what you pray for ; often you do not receive at all what you pray for ; it is impossible that you should always receive". They also said, "you sow in this life and reap in the next, where only grand results are seen." I read different scriptures and found in them diverse reasons given for such a belief. But, in our case with our slender strength and slender efforts, we obtained without delay gifts for which many men waited long and wasted their bodies. Religious reformers of great intelligence and learning underwent great hardships and much labor for the propagation of truth but they failed to see

results in this life and passed on to the next. A thousand years after they sowed the seeds, we now reap the fruits. But now the times have become more favourable, and mighty love has grown mightier and has changed the course of events. We find that a work which formerly required five hundred years is now accomplished in twenty-five years ; what required a whole day is now done in a single hour. Trees, which took long years to grow and bear fruit, do so now in a short time. Invoking the name of God we set to work ; and before two years elapse we have abundant results. Crowds have collected, and men have come from distant countries to take up onerous burdens. What was the state of things twenty-five years ago and what is it now ? No one knew, no one could imagine, that it would be so. Then, how different religions fought with each other ; how addicted were people to vice ; how feeble was the theism of the Bráhma Samaj ; what a want there was of love of God and loving-devotion to Him, what a lack of enthusiasm swayed the weak men and women of Bengal ? After unremitting efforts for about twenty years the prospect of propagating and perpetuating truth has considerably increased. In a country where mighty deeds become fruitless, the theism of the Bráhma Samaj has matured into the New Dispensation. Not a year has passed when we have not prospered. Not a month or a week has passed when the Lord has not worked through us, and men have not heard the message of heaven. The lion's strength has increased ; and not only Bengal but the whole of India now quivers and thrills. No work was taken in hand for the New Dispensation but has succeeded ; no effort was made but has borne its fruit. Great monumental institutions have been established. Small deeds which men of faith began in the name of the Lord have also succeeded. Now am I able to say with my eyes fixed on the True Sun and my hands put into the True Fire that I have received what was to be received, that I have seen what was to be seen.

Those, who had opened shops in the Joy-Market, have made an abundant profit. I have always made a profit in all branches of my business, and have never incurred any loss. Now nothing daunts me, nothing troubles me. Whatever account books I open, I find that the business opened with five pounds, and the profit has been five millions. Thus he, who opened his shop in the straw-market, has now uncountable money. Who can thwart his success for whom 'victory' was written at his birth in indelible letters by God Himself? God said, "these men shall succeed; in their hands dust shall turn into gold; whatever they will undertake in My name shall benefit the world."

I did not enter into my work with any selfish end. My desire was not to earn a few paltry rupees. I came to my work, because I was grieved at the sorrows of my country. In my early life the Lord bade me ask a boon. What boon did the man of faith ask? He asked for success. And the Lord wrote with His own hand, "To the man of faith, success is sure." I have since verified that whatever is entered upon with faith meets with success.

So many wonderful instances in proof of this are now accumulating, that it is difficult to count them. Say, O opponents, what undertaking for the Bráhma Church of India, for the Bráhma Samaj of India or for the New Dispensation has not succeeded. See what has come to be. The name of God now resounds in the country. Where drunkenness raged, men are now intoxicated with Chaitanya's sweet name of *Hari*. Who knew that the English-educated men of the country would walk the streets, like the lower classes, playing on the *khol* and singing *sankirtans*? When scepticism and atheism prevailed on all sides and unbelief threatened to flood the whole country, who knew that at such a time the young men of Bengal would, with closed eyes, shout, "I have found my God; here I have laid hold of the Supreme Lord, the Great God, the God of my heart"? We have now seen this with our eyes, and have shown

this to the world. The worshippers of *Kali* (the Goddess of power) and the worshippers of *Krishna* (the God of love) are now reconciled. Kali and Krishna now sit together. The man of devotion sees Kali in Krishna and Krishna in Kali. Power is now worshipped as Love and Love worshipped as Power. In Bengal, the loving worshippers of Power and the power-seeking worshippers of Love are becoming blended together. The time is come when the temple of the Goddess of Power and that of the God of Love will combine into one golden temple. The love, which the worshippers of the Goddess of Power felt for their Mother, is now given to the God of Love ; and the devotion, which the worshippers of the God of Love had for Him, is given to the Goddess of Power. By the will of God both are united in the New Dispensation. Our continuous labour for the last twenty-five years has been bearing fruit. Caste and other superstitions ruled the country. How bitterly did I not weep on that account ? What tears did I not shed for the advent of Chaitanya and his love which disregarded all caste distinctions ? Every drop of tear fertilized a large tract of land ; not by my merit, but because I laid hold of the feet of my God. I say again, that a handful of dust is transformed into a handful of gold. The name of God has entered into the hearts of the learned and the refined ; the spirit of the ancient Rishis has descended into the young men of Bengal. How much did not I pray to my God ? And in answer to our prayers and entreaties the Lord has been bringing these things to pass. Therefore do I say that we always make immediate profit.

Some service has to be rendered to the country. That it may not be unsuccessful on account of thousands of men undertaking to do it, the number diminishes and strength is focussed in a few men of faith. I see prosperity on all sides. Men take the name of God more and more. In twenty-five years the face of the country has assumed a new look. If now our enemies increase in number, or if the fire of dispute blazes

up, or if danger threatens to sweep us away, we fear not. For we were born to be victorious. We never lost a battle. In all the great battles that we fought, in all circumstances favorable or unfavorable in which we were placed, we came out victorious. The Lord touched us with His hand and we became invincible. We have innumerable proofs of His love; and hundreds of great institutions have been established on all sides.

The Lord saith, "you did not labor much and yet for your labor I have given you a tenfold recompense." We could do nothing, unless we got such large recompense and immediate recompense. For, we are day labourers and depend on daily earnings. The Lord knew that unless we were paid daily, His words would not sound sweet to us; and we would not stick to His service. Therefore He adopted the rule of daily payments and gave us a tenfold recompense for our labor. I feel that I am becoming again a young man in my declining years. I shall again labor hard and shake the whole of Bengal. I feel as if a million of young men are entering into my body, and that regenerated youth is making my eyes blaze with the fire of re-kindled enthusiasm. Shall I not consecrate my new energies to the service of my God?

I have been much hurt, much persecuted and trampled by many; but I feel that I have incurred no loss. Glory to God, glory, glory be unto Him. I have always been making a profit. Whatever I have done has attracted thousands of men to God. Even if I now shut myself up in my room, I shall see thousands invoking the name of God. I cried to my God "Have I not wept for this?" And, at once in Calcutta my God showed me the ancient *Brindában*, the same river *Yamuná* and the same devotions of love.

Do I grieve because I have no riches and no lands? I am the servant of God; and whatever belongs to Him belongs to His servant. I have thus the whole universe in my possession. Was I born for defeat? So long as my tongue is able to invoke the name of God, I shall never suffer defeat. Though I have nothing, no riches, no

honor, not much of spiritual culture, yet the power of the name of God is with me and with my party. I now see Chaitanya dancing in our midst. How can I disbelieve what I see with my own eyes? This man of loving-devotion never met with defeat ; under no circumstances did he meet with defeat ; he always won. What more do you want to know ? With victory have I unfurled the banner of God in the streets. But I was never swollen with pride. By the power of invoking God, men like you and me can accomplish everything. By that power we would take up this earth, as a man takes up a platter, and hurl it into heaven.

It is because we are the meanest of men that the earth is yet in this deplorable condition. But even in this condition I have found that mean base things are transformed into gold if only touched in the name of God. Houses have been built on waste lands. The New Dispensation has been entering into the hearts of even those who opposed it. The Hindus and the Christians are becoming friends. Krishna and Christ are being reconciled. The old and the young are uniting in love. A thousand doors of progress have opened. Men of Bengal, hurry on ; the wind is now favourable. Come, do come to the ghat of loving-devotion ; unfurl the sails of your boat and move onwards. When one sinner has accomplished so many great deeds, how very much more could you, a thousand brothers joined together, spread the glory of God's name ; and how immensely more great deeds could you perform. One sinner has shown so much ; show you, a thousand good men, very much more. The country must not be allowed to remain where it is. The chariot of blessings has come down, the chariot of holiness is at the door. Carry the news to all men and women. Who can kill us ? Nay, who can strike these immortal souls ? Invincible you are ; take up Bengal and hurl it into heaven.

Refuge of the poor, Saviour of India, how happy hast Thou made us. People say that the world is full of obstacles ; they sow seeds, the rains withhold, and the

seedlings dry up. We heard many such tales of woe. Even they, who spend their whole time in religious exercises, told us many frightening stories. But, by Thy grace, we never believed that we would ever incur any loss or suffer any defeat. Sure of the power of Thy name, we fought without caring if we live or die. How can he die in battle with Satan who puts on Thy invincible armour? Otherwise the tiger would have killed *Dhruva*. Never did, never could, such a thing happen. Therefore did we in times of danger continually call upon Thee. See, Mother, how many kingdoms have I conquered, which I now rule. They, who avoided me as untouchable, have now come to me as my guests. They, who struck us with potsherd and drew blood from our forehead, have now come to us entreating, "Show us your Mother. We would worship Her. We fought against the New Dispensation. We have seen the blood of the children of God. But we shall now acknowledge your Mother." Mother dear, whether Thou hast given us other gifts or not, Thou hast given us the gift of success. The banner of our success floats in the air; and the rain of our success pours down on earth. We thank Thee, Mother, for this blessing. How great is the happiness that Thou hast bestowed on Thy poor sons and daughters. We had not to practise religion on credit; we had not to spend our days in lonely forests in expectation of uncertain success. What a number of men are walking in that path of uncertainty! What joy it is to us that we had not to take to that path. We have found heaven on earth; heaven in us, before us and around us. Bengal quivers with life. Where no one took the name of God, people now sing His name to the accompaniment of the *khol*; the young and the old vie with each other in dancing; and men loudly argue, as to who excels in loving-devotion to God. My God, how have things changed! Great benefits have we derived from Thy worship. No single tongue can describe the virtues of Thy worship. The gifts we shall receive in the life to come, we leave to the future. What we have got in this life has brought us im-

mense joy ; for, we have got possession of Thy feet. How many reforms are in progress in this country ; how many people are coming towards us ; and what improvements are taking place ! Who will count the parties that are uniting together, and the distinctions of caste, sect and time that are being wiped away ? Lord, deign to infuse the light of Thy faith ; and iron India will turn to golden India ; India of the iron age will be transformed into the India of the golden age. The light of the full moon now shines on India. O, what great things has my poor mother-country got ! She has indeed been blessed. Infinite Mercy, bless us so that, remembering that we shall never suffer defeat, we may devotedly preach Thy New Dispensation everywhere with whole-hearted zeal. Merciful Mother, grant Thy children this blessing.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PARTS AND THE WHOLE.

At one time the mind considers an external object in its several parts ; at another time it considers that object as a whole. In the spiritual kingdom also, the same consideration in parts and consideration as a whole are constantly made. As in the material world objects are reduced to elements, and elements are combined into objects, so in the spiritual world the mind is always busy with division and unification. In some minds the desire to divide dominates ; in others that to unite. The former reduce an object into its parts by power of thought, study the object in its various aspects, and ponder separately on each of its attributes. The latter are averse to division and want to see objects in their entirety. They feel strongly against considering the attributes severally, or looking at the parts separately.

In my life there has always been an effort to harmonize these two tendencies. I cannot say that the harmony was attained all at once. Like all other men I was in early life partial to fractional views. The desire to know parts one by one was strong in me ; and I tried to understand each part minutely, in isolation. At first, my sole endeavour was to get rid of sins and evil propensities. Then for months, my only occupation was to serve my fellowmen and thus fulfil the end of life. Sometime, the predominant thought was to get rid of selfishness and be immersed in benevolence. At one time I was eager for study and coveted books ; at another time I was tired of study and disliked books.

I had both the tendencies in my mind and followed one or the other according to its predominance. I practised asceticism, holiness and love one at a time. Of the attributes of God, justice first made a deep impression on my mind. Outside me I saw manifestations of His justice ; and repentance for my own sins took a strong and powerful hold of my mind. A long time after, the sense of God's mercy replaced that of His justice ; and love and loving-devotion to Him were born in my heart and took the place of repentance.

I was not at that time eager to lay hold of all the attributes of God at one and the same time. I took hold of only that attribute which was then necessary for me. My days passed at that time in confining myself to fractional views. I desired only to lay hold of that attribute which was necessary to me. I had then no love for the whole. I thought that I could neither lay hold of the whole nor needed to do so. The dispensary was open before me ; but I had no eye for the beauty of the whole. The sick man stretches his hand only for the medicine he needs. The idea of the New Dispensation had not then entered into my mind, the sense of beauty had not been born. Yet the desire lurked within, that when I recovered I would see if my mind was not partial to a part only. My illness was serious, my wants were urgent, and hence was my desire strong to take only the particular medicines that were then necessary. When my wants were removed one by one, I wondered at the economy of nature. Though she was writing her book in prose, I found there was also much poetry in it. I discovered that she was bringing one gift after another and combining them into a whole according to her fixed rules. When I needed a flower I took it with a thankful heart and when I needed a leaf I took it with equal thankfulness. And then I found that some One was stringing them into a garland. I had at first no intention to string them all into the New Dispensation, but afterwards I found that some One within me was doing it.

Who knew that Jesus had to be accepted ? But when the need was felt, I brought him from Palestine into my heart. When again I found that Chaitanya was essential, I brought him from Nadia and placed him in my bosom. Now Buddha became necessary, and I brought him from under the Bo-tree into my life. Who knew that the three were to be brought together ? Who perceived that the Lord was bringing His devoted sons one by one and forming a galaxy of them ? I had no idea that some One without my knowledge was carrying out within me such a plan. I only took hold of one at a time, him whom I felt necessary according to the need of the time and the inclination of my heart.

But the root of harmony of the parts and their entirety was within my mind. I could not confine myself long to any one idea ; and even now I cannot. I could never restrict myself to any one attribute of God. I meditated on God's justice to get rid of sin. After a while I felt that if I rested satisfied with justice only, my culture would be only a fractional one. And at once I began to meditate on God's love. I continued to do so deeply, and kept up a smiling face day and night. My mind now warned me not to run so fast and go too far in one direction. So I went back to the meditation of justice. As soon as I found the boat drifting in one direction, I pulled it in the other. It has been my constant effort to retain the naturalness of the soul. When I found that much study made me unduly intellectual, I began the attempt to attain the innocence and simplicity of the child. When I apprehended danger in one direction, I ran in the opposite. Thus has there been a constant attempt for harmonious development. And what I did in my own case, I did in the case of the members of my Church. When I found in them undue dominance of labor and work, I recalled them to faith and communion. In a month contemplation superseded work, and the men of much work enjoyed the deep joy of meditation. Again when I found that contemplation interfered with their service of fellowmen, I brought conscience

to bear upon them. It was because their minds were similar to mine that they could so go from one culture to its opposite. Thus passed our time; but we have been progressing towards harmony, towards the New Dispensation.

I have left fractional religion behind and been progressing towards perfection. I can no longer practise a fractional culture. The meaning of the New Dispensation which the Lord hath vouchsafed for the welfare of my mother-country is nothing but perfection. The idea of perfection was within me. A long time ago I inscribed on my heart in golden letters what the great Rishi Jesus had said, "Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" And I thought I would never be content with fractions. The attributes of God are all perfect. In Him every attribute, mercy, asceticism or joy, is in its fulness. In me it is so different. When I practise asceticism, my joy diminishes; and when I am mad with joy, my asceticism decreases. I do not probably realize God as vividly in water as in land. I realize Him in one place but fail to do so in another. I see Him in the virtuous man and not in the sinner. They are both equally the children of God; but I see Him not in the face of the sinner. Should I see the God of Jesus and not the God of Budha? Would you wilfully welcome the one and send away the other? Do you think that the love of Chaitanya would delight your heart, but the conscience of Jesus would not bring you happiness? Do you harbour any hidden sins that you want to send Jesus away? Do you attach yourself only to Chaitanya that you may not have to look at your sins? Do you want to enjoy an artificial happiness in oblivion? Is that the explanation of your attitude?

I am no longer satisfied with a part. When I love one prophet more than another, I am afraid that I offend the latter. When I enshrine Chaitanya in my heart to the exclusion of Buddha, I feel that I displease Buddha. Do I love Chaitanya and send Jesus away? Is it because I am a Bengali Hindu that I love Chai-

tanya and do not love Jesus who is a foreigner? The old Rishis of India sat on the tiger skin and put on the yellow robe. Lest it be a disrespect to them, I went to them and adopted their tiger skin and yellow robe. "Rishis, dwellers of the hermitage," said I, "shall I fail to honour you for the sake of refinement? No, I shall love you in this nineteenth-century. Come let me honour you." And I loved and honored them. When I have done welcoming one saint, another approaches. The Lord has so taught *Narada*, the inviter within the heart, that when I ask him to invite one saint or one sacred truth, he goes round and invites all saints and all sacred truths. If I want to invite and welcome only one saint, the inner inviter will not allow it. If I have to invite one, I have to invite all, as if the saints are all joined together, as if Moses and Jesus live with their hands interlocked. It is for this reason I have called the New Bráhmaism the New Dispensation. Others may retain their fractional religion, but that is not possible for the men of the New Dispensation. When I felt in my life that the acceptance of any one prophet or any one set of truths, in exclusion of others, was an offence, I found it necessary to present Bráhmaism in this new name.

I have grown in years. I have gathered all the fractional views acquired during these years into a bunch. The prophets have all been gathered into a bouquet. So have been all the sacred truths. One day came to me the Rishi of ancient India, another day Nanak from the Punjab, yet another day Kabir from Oudh. One by one they all came, Jesus and Chaitanya and the other prophets. He, Who was working within me, bade them all take their allotted seats. Repentance, good work, asceticism, joy, the quietness of old age, the simplicity of the child, the energy of youth, came to me one by one. He, Who is at the root of my life, strung all the gems into a garland and put it round my neck. Now appeared to me the beauty of the present life, and again that of the life to come. The present and the future life became to

me one life ; and on earth I enjoyed the joys of heaven. Two musical instruments sounded first. Afterwards came there, one after another, all the others. All combined and made one instrument, and they made a delicious harmony.

Now I seek only perfection. I have been advancing towards it, continually advancing. Friends and brethren, who wanted to run with me, halted on the way. But this fortunate man never halted ; he has always been going forward. The Lord named me 'pilgrim' when He sent me to the world and told me that I should get no halting place. Therefore have I been always going forward. I ran in the rains, and I ran during the winter ; inclemency of the season did not hinder me. I ran in my boyhood ; I ran in my youth ; and I shall have to run after death. The New Dispensation shall certainly attain perfection. Ye, who have accompanied this pilgrim, be ye ready to run, for there are yet many wants to be supplied. Friends and brethren, we have to advance with our eyes fixed on the perfection of God. Insult no longer your God by accepting fractions ; pierce no more the heart of the New Dispensation.

Friend of the poor, God of perfection, the earth has always offended by adhering to fractional religions ; and we did the same in the beginning. Different sects practise different parts of religion ; and hence there prevail so much dispute. When we were in the Hindu society and when we had not attained faith, we also practised a fractional religion. We have now realized that we have to acquire gradually all the parts of religion and attain perfection. From the time the New Dispensation entered into my soul, I have always been afraid lest in accepting Jesus, I send away Chaitanya, the friend of my heart ; lest by attaching myself only to justice, I grieve love and kill her ; lest by enthroning one brother in my heart, I murder another ; lest by adorning one sister with gold, I bid another sister to depart. I can no longer do any such thing. When I give my love to Jesus in disregard to

all others and look within, I find that I am miserable and that Jesus also is grieved. For in giving such love to Jesus alone, I exile all other brothers from my heart. God of perfection, love in Thy kingdom is all-embracing. Thy children want to live together holding one another by the shoulder. Thy justice and Thy love dance together. All Thy attributes commingle and make one attribute. I have seen the seven colors* blend and make one color. I have seen the wonderful beauty of the New Dispensation. Bless me, Father, that I may see Thee in Thy perfection, see all Thy children together and see perfect beauty. Then only will end all the sorrows of my heart. The conduct of men around me grieves me. Some of them are engaged only in fighting sins; others only in seeking joy. Some rest satisfied with Jesus; others are mad with Chaitanya. Some leave every thing else for works of benevolence; others follow conscience in exclusion of all other pieties. We are grieved at seeing the worship of some attributes only. Bless us that, when we look upon Thee, we may see the whole of Thee. Bless us that seeing the whole of Thee, love and holiness may swell up in our hearts. Bless us that our souls may rejoice at seeing the full assembly of prophets. I cannot rest satisfied with seeing only a few of them. Thou hast vouchsafed to us the New Dispensation; and we are eager to be as perfect as it is. Those, who believe in the New Dispensation, are eager to be perfect. We are no longer content to see a part or to attain a part. Why should the children of the perfect God accept only a part? Come, perfect God, and this heart will be Thy throne. Come Thou with Thy perfect power, perfect wisdom, perfect love and perfect holiness. Let not this poor man wait and suffer any longer. I stretch out both my hands for Thee; come Thou in Thy undivided Power, Wisdom and Love; come into my

* Keshub worshipped God in seven attributes—Reality, Knowledge, Infinity, Love, Unity, Holiness and Joy.

heart in Thy fulness. He, who seeks only a part, obtains only a part. He, who seeks the whole, sees the Mother in Her fulness. I pray to Thee for all mankind that fractional religions may disappear from the earth, and that all men may combine in one religion. When shall we embrace the New Dispensation with our whole heart? May all the attributes of God shed their light on our hearts like a million of suns, so that we may be overwhelmed by the sight. May we be merged in the Infinite. May we have no more to sit on the bank of the Ganges with pieces of the dismembered Mother. God of perfection, God of perfection, so should we utter, and meditate continually, and attain perfection. I see no salvation without perfection. Mother dear, when I admire Thy beauty Thou sayest,—Child, why not admire My excellences? When I meditate only on Thy excellences, Thou sayest—Does a child think only of the Mother's excellences; hast thou no eye for My beauty? Merciful Mother, thus hast Thou always put me to shame; never have I succeeded in securing Thy praise. When I admire Thy jewels Thou sayest—is not My dress exquisite? When I admire Thy dress, Thou sayest—why disregard My jewels? When I say, Mother dear, wonderful is Thy justice, Thou revealest at once Thy infinite love and askest if that is less. When I honor conscience, Thou sayest—Is love negligible? Tell me, what shall I do? Partial culture no more satisfies my soul. Shew me the way to attain perfection. Make them, who are satisfied with a part, weep like us. Direct us all to where perfect heaven is. God of infinite mercy, bless us in Thy mercy that we may follow the perfect religion and thus remove all our wants, that we may be immersed in the joy of perfect holiness. Merciful Mother, have pity on us and grant us this blessing.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE THREE ELEMENTS OF SPIRITUAL LIFE.

A little consideration will convince any person that the life of a man of faith does not consist of a single element. It will be found to be a compound made up of three elements. If you ask me how I found that out, I reply, that by reflecting upon my own life, I found there the three elements. It is not that I began life with deliberation, with a desire to have these three elements in union ; but the current of my life flowed on for a long time, and then I looked in and found that it did not consist of one element only. I examined closely and discovered of what elements it was made up. There are three persons in my life, three natures dwell in me, three types are harmonized there, three elements make up a composite character. One is a child, another a madman and the third an inebriate.

It will be evident to all, that the natures of these three differ from one another. They are easily known ; it does not not require any acute discrimination or deep study to understand them. Blessed are they who have the three natures combined in their life ; for wonderful wisdom, wonderful holiness and wonderful salvation are attained by their combination. Character remains incomplete in the absence of any one of them ; as if the Lord hath said that no good and happy man or family could be formed without a combination of these three ingredients. Secretly and slowly do these ingredients combine in the life of every man of faith. The more a man strives after spiritual life, the more child-like he becomes ; the more he communes with God, the more he resembles the madman ; the more he tastes of heaven

through singing and dancing, the more he approximates the inebriate. In the early stage of the religious life only traces of these natures are seen ; but with its growth they become more and more pronounced.

The characteristic of the child is his naturalness ; and it is easily discerned. A child cannot mix with the old. A dry and shrivelled-up state of life produces in him a feeling of dislike and repulsion. He loves play and loves the company of children. The more a man finds that simplicity is becoming natural to him, that dryness, insincerity and deceit are becoming repulsive, that he desires to speak out his mind, the more he feels himself to be a child. The older a man becomes, the more he loses the brightness of his face. If a man loses strength, vigour and energy with his age, he becomes spiritless and inactive ; and gradually all desire for work departs from him. These symptoms indicate that he is old and not young.

Reading the Bible of my life I find that with growing age I have advanced more towards child-nature. I do not feel that I have been growing old. According to the false arithmetic of the world, I have to say that I have been growing old. But at heart, and according to the arithmetic of our country, I have been growing younger and younger : my age has been gradually diminishing. If you do not admit so much, you should at least admit that I have not been growing old. At half past four in the morning, do two minutes more make any difference. We do not count them. The difference between five minutes to five and eight minutes to five may well be kept out of count. Thirty to sixty years of the present life are but a moment by the side of millions of years of the future life ; and a moment is indeed of no account. We say a child is eighteen months old. If he is four days older than that, what matters it ? I am such a child only eighteen months old. In the field of labour where I shall labor for millions of years I am quite a little child. I came into being only the other day ; it is not yet time to

think of passing away. A year or a hundred years of the present life are only a second of the clock of the eternal life. Why should we be anxious that thirty or forty years of our life have passed away? When people of the world say, an old man of eighty has passed away; men of our country say, a child of two has passed away. When people here say, he went running fast; our men say, he went crawling. A decayed body does not make a man old; the simplicity of his heart makes him a child. The heaven within the heart is heaven indeed! May the Lord preserve it in us.

Childhood may also be known by the company that one keeps. If I say that I ever sought the company of the old, it would be false. I seek only the company of the child; I kiss the child; I place my face against his. I would take the dust of his feet. He is my rose; he reminds me of heaven. I long to be in his company. When I look at old men turning their faces towards the grave, I feel that they are trying to bring old age on themselves.

Let those, who have ears for the Bible of life, hear. When you constantly call upon your Mother, you become a child. If you worship only the King of kings, you may become old. So long as you worship the Mother, you never become old, and never will. As long as we cling to the Mother's lap, as long as we feed on the milk of Her breast, we shall surely remain children and shall never become old. In the next life we shall enter school; and there also the lesson will be that God is to be worshipped as the Mother.

With the ingredient of the child is combined the ingredient of the madman. The madman has no community of thought and feeling with the world. What is north to the world is south to him. His literature, philosophy and arithmetic are different from, and contrary to, those of the world. It is not right to follow worldly men, but it is necessary to be like the madman. It is necessary to enter constantly upon undertakings which worldly people would declare foolish.* Being the

very opposite of what they undertake, they would ridicule them as those of the mad and the insane. The scripture of the madman is different. Worldly men have only derision for it. But the more our men read it, the more are they delighted. The madman does not regulate his actions according to the worldly rules of profit or loss but, in a thousand matters, goes the way which brings on loss. Worldly men walk on earth, he tries to walk on the sky. If he has to build a house, he builds it on ideas. Worldly men consider themselves rich when they have millions ; but he considers himself rich even without a penny.

The madman excites the laughter of the world. I consider myself fortunate when anything in my life excites such laughter. The world found many things in my life to laugh at. I consider that these made the *golden* portion of my life, and the contrary to madness the *iron* portion. The more I forget the world like the madman, the happier I am. When I find prudence creeping into my life, I fear that I am going to be worldly-minded ; and I wonder in what company I have fallen. When I happen to be in the company of the shrewd, I feel uneasy and become anxious to get away. I am afraid even to look at the path in which the shrewd men of the world walk. I am loath to go to the sordid places where they assemble. If I have to go to such places on business I long to come away. The madman seeks the madman, the shrewd man his like. As long as you stay with a madman, you will find him speaking incoherently. His eyes have no attraction for those who work with a thought for the morrow ; but he seeks the place where other madmen have assembled in the lunatic asylum. He has his eyes on, and wants to go to, the place where madmen are invoking the name of God and dancing. The child dances in me, and so does the madman. Madness has attained its maturity in me. If now I worship God with prudence, I feel as if I ridicule my God. If I read the scriptures with prudence, I feel as if I have come to deceive my God. When I

worship like a madman, read the scripture like a madman, dance like a madman, and work like a madman, then I am filled with great joy.

The third ingredient of my life is that of the inebriate. You know the symptoms of intoxication with wine. Our symptoms are not different. A wine-bibber has to increase his dose ; so have we. At first we used to worship for five minutes only ; now our worship takes five hours. Then we used to be satisfied by taking the name of God only once ; now we take it a great many times, and even that does not satisfy ; we want to go on with it. One look at God used to suffice ; but now we want to stay on looking. Any wine used to do ; but now we want strong wine. I believe that Jesus, Chaitanya and other big inebriates are now in a state of perfect intoxication. There is nothing like that on earth. Wine of that quality is seldom found here below. It is true that we also pray with folded hands, and our prayer has its own value ; but the prayer of Moses and Jesus has a quite different value. The contemplation of God deprives them of the consciousness of everything else. I love always to be in a state of intoxication.

What other symptoms has the inebriate ? He wishes not only to increase his dose, but like the wine-bibber, when his heart expands, he wants to increase the number of his companions. I want indeed a large number of companions ; I want to form a large party ; I want to extend the field of my *sankirtan*. I was once satisfied when I could preach to a thousand men or sing *sankirtan* with a thousand men. I am not now satisfied even with six thousand men ; I want more. I look forward for the day when the Lord will increase the number. And I endeavour constantly to increase it. If my friends and companions continuously drink of the heavenly nectar, then I feel that the desire of my heart is fulfilled. So long as the East and the West do not turn mad, so long as all men are not intoxicated with the heavenly nectar, my intoxication-red eyes will not be satisfied. There is no joy in being intoxicated alone.

I have not found the fulness of joy in being intoxicated even with thousands of men. I want to be intoxicated along with millions.

The child wants to find other children ; the madman desires the company of other madmen ; the inebriate seeks other inebriates. I am continually seeking those who are mad for God, who are intoxicated with God. I wish to find out such men of my country from everywhere. I want to be more childlike, madder and more intoxicated. I embrace and adore men of these three natures. I consider these states to be jewels of the highest price to be worn on the crown. So long as one possesses these natures he has happiness and holiness. The day I become old and cease to be mad and to be intoxicated, I shall have to die. May the Lord so ordain that I may never lose these three natures.

Friend of the poor, Infinite Ocean of Mercy, what joy I find when I am able to sit in Thy lap. I offend if I think I have grown in years and have attained wisdom and piety. But the more I remember that I have attained nothing and must cling to Thy lap, the happier I feel. Far from having grown old, I become afraid if some one else tries to take me from Thy lap to hers. I am afraid of the old. The knowledge that I have known none but Thee, my Mother, brings happiness and salvation. May I know Thee more and more, this is my prayer. May I drink nothing but the milk of Thy breast. I am at the very beginning of my life ; and I can eat no bread, can eat no meat, nor any hard food ; I am an infant in arms ; I cannot stand ; I shall cling to my Mother's lap. Merciful Mother, the more I drank the milk of Thy breast when engaged in Thy worship, and enjoyed the delights of the child, the more mad and intoxicated I became. I wondered what might in Thy milk be, which produced in Thy child, when he sucked it, madness like that from the thorn-apple, and intoxication like that from wine. As often as I have sucked Thy milk, I have been overpowered by madness and intoxication. When I go to preach un-intoxicated

I make mistakes. When I engage in religious exercises in that state, I fail. But when I engage in either in an intoxicated state, I succeed well. When I call Thee Merciful Mother, Merciful Mother, Merciful Mother, Thy milk streams into my mouth and the maddening ingredient that is in it overpowers me. I talk incoherently and behave like a drunkard. But, Mother dear, such talk and such behaviour make me happy: Such intoxication and such madness are good. I want not to be worldly-wise. Keep me a child; send me no old age. There will be no harm if my hairs turn grey; but save me from the oldness of the heart. My God, it is delightful to remain a child. I shall worship Thee in simple words like a child in whom is no guile. Save me from crookedness, for it takes away all joy. My God, do not allow the poison of old age to enter into the body of Thy child. Thou art my Mother, and I only wish that Thou wouldst kiss me and rock me in Thy arms. Thou hearest our prayers in the temple, Thou takest us up in Thy lap and dost caress us. Compassionate Mother, bless me that I may always remain a child, and always retain madness and intoxication, and that I may get rid of what oldness may have crept into me. Merciful Mother, may I attain utter madness by drinking spiritual nectar and dance like a madman and like a child. May I enter heaven dancing. With this hope in my heart, I bow repeatedly in loving-devotion unto Thy feet.

CHAPTER XIV.

MY CASTE.

If men be divided into two classes, the rich and the poor, in what class shall I include myself? My soul, what is thy caste? Art thou a child of the rich or of the poor? I had often to ask my soul if it was born rich, or was it to be counted poor. The decision of this question is an important chapter of the Bible of my life. It is necessary to know in what caste was my soul born. It is natural to enquire what is my nature; like unto which caste are my tastes, inclinations and modes of action; and with which caste do I naturally love to associate. I wish first of all to know my caste. After a long enquiry, a close deliberation for twenty-five years and a minute examination of my tastes and desires, I have come to the conclusion that my soul belongs to the class of the poor. The blood of my heart and the substance of my brain are those of the poor. My daily food and daily habits abundantly show the signs of poverty. If my conclusion were based on suppositions, it might be false; and its utterance from the pulpit would be a grievous sin. But I based my conclusion on observations of the inmost tastes of my heart for a long number of years. And I can take truth as my witness that no falsity, error or supposition attaches to it. It is after trial in various ways that I declare myself poor.

Though I am descended from a high family, though my surroundings indicate possession of wealth, yet my mind has no feelings that usually accompany high birth and wealth. I have wealth but no desire for its use; I have rich articles of food but no appetite for them; my mind is satisfied with common things. Honor and

respect surround me, but my heart takes no notice of them. If both the rich and the poor come to me, I leave the rich and seek the poor; and I enjoy their company. These facts clearly shew the caste of my soul. These tests save the judge from falling into any error. They cannot mislead, because they have been tested on definite occasions. Though I am poor at heart, my surroundings are of the rich. In these circumstances the tests are easy to apply. If I were born in the hut of the poor and not in the mansion of the rich, it would have been difficult to apply the tests. For then the heat of wealth might have lurked within, while out of necessity I would have lived a poor man's life. Outwardly I have the marks of the rich, but what has to be seen is whether I bear those marks within. When my heart forsakes wealth and seeks poverty, it has to be concluded that poverty is natural to me and my soul is of the poor.

Brought up by a rich grandfather and a rich father and encircled by wealth and prosperity, my heart gave evidence of its natural poverty with the growth of years. I was satisfied with very common food. The habits of poverty were natural to me; I had to take no pains to acquire them. I always liked rice and vegetables. If I preferred anything over all others in that line, it was green vegetable leaves. This fact reveals a marvellous truth of my life. It may not be interesting to others, but to me it is a wonderful thing. My heart was naturally so satisfied with green vegetable leaves, and it found such delight in so common a thing, that I knew from it that the Lord had special mercy on me. If I have to travel by rail, I am afraid to leave the third and travel first class. Many thoughts pass through my mind; I might be usurping a right I had not; I might be trespassing into the domain of the rich; I might have to be uneasy the whole time; foreign manners and articles might rob me of contentment and peace of mind. The heart decides in a moment that it would suit my nature better to travel second class instead of the first and

third class instead of the second. There is no hesitation in making the choice, for my mind seeks for its comfort the place occupied by the poor and the lowly. If ever I travel first class I do so from a sense of duty. But if I consult my heart it says,—Comfort is in the third class, for there the mind will be much less disturbed than in the first. This also shows that I was created for the poor and not for the rich. In the company of the poor I find rest ; and the safety of my life is only there.

I did not acquire the spirit of poverty by striving for it ; it manifested itself spontaneously. When I have to walk in the streets, I do so like a poor man. Nobody told me that in walking through the streets singing *sankirtans*, one ought to walk like a poor man. Nobody taught me that to go barefooted would be a sign of the lowly. I did not consider what the rich would think of it ; nor did I heed that the newspapers might ridicule, or that it would actually lower me in the estimate of the public. I did not only not consider such points, but I did not even think that they were matters for consideration. But I left my shoes and walked barefooted. I did not teach thee poverty, my soul ; yet thou didst learn it. I did not place thee in a hut ; but spontaneously didst thou walk through the dust. On this subject many more examples may be collected. The world may understand it or not ; but I fully understand that my soul is the soul of the lowly, my mind is that of the poor, and my body that of the poor and lowly. In all things the signs of lowliness and poverty are manifest in me. True, I shake hands with the rich, and I sit among them ; but these cannot change my nature. A *Chandala* does not become a Brahmin by touching him. A man, whose daily food is rice and vegetables, does not become rich by dining one day at the king's table. Nature will never change, and therefore, have I been safe in spite of my mixing with all classes of people. I know the marks of the castes ; and by them I find out and ascertain easily who are the poor.

It is essential that I should here speak of a thing that is written in my scripture. Though I live with the poor and the lowly, though the ragged poor are my dearest friends, though they, who are satisfied with a little, are my most intimate companions, yet I have learnt that lesson. It was said of old : "hate the rich and honor the poor ; regard not the powerful ; the rich cannot walk in the path of salvation ; virtue does not abide with honor and wealth, it dwells only in the hut." But according to the present scripture, according to the New Dispensation, the teaching is "honor the poor ; honor also the rich ; they both walk in the path to heaven ; there is no harm in outward riches ; what is needful is the poverty of the heart ; outward riches are no bar in the way to heaven ; draw the poor to your heart, draw also the rich to your heart ; love them both without distinction." This is the new teaching of the New Dispensation, its new doctrine. Religion dwells equally in the palace and in the hut. The man devoted to God embraces in his love both the *Nawab* and the *Chandala*. The man of love treats the king and the poor equally. He does not consider the riches of the rich nor the poverty of the poor, but his love goes out to man as man.

This doctrine strongly impressed itself on my heart, and there was a reason for it. Though I came to this earth with a humble nature and heart, though I knew from early life that I was poor and lowly, yet I found that I was born in a rich family, in a palatial building, in the midst of wealth and surrounded by men-servants and women-servants. On all sides was wealth and prosperity. The battle raged between outer facts and inner feeling. I asked myself—why was I not born in the family of a *Chandala*, in a family which engaged no servants and kept no carriages ? Why did the Lord place a poor man among the rich ? Why had I to keep the company of rich boys in boyhood and of rich young men in youth ? Why had I to enter the college to receive high education ? The Lord knew why. There was a deep hidden meaning in all these. I did not

understand it at that time. If while I was poor at heart, I had also to live among the poor and adopt their ways of life, I would probably have loved the poor, but would have sought to hurl the axe on the head of the rich. Who could say that if I were born among the poor, I would have loved the rich as I loved the poor? The Lord of my life ordained that I should be born in a rich family, and have deep poverty within my heart, and great family wealth before my eyes. With open eyes I saw wealth around me and with closed eyes I perceived poverty within me. I bowed down unto my Lord a thousand times for having thus placed me under these two opposing influences. Therefore have I loved both the rich and the poor. I forgot all distinctions, distinctions of color and caste, and I embraced all men in my love. Now with outstretched arms I have been bringing in the rich man into the New Dispensation and also with loving embrace the penniless wanderer into it. I have been seating the rich and the learned on one side, and the ignorant and the poor on the other. I have been gathering in those who read and also those who do not. Every one has been accepting our loving embrace and filling the house of the New Dispensation.

What happy times are the present! Fortunate it was that I knew both the castes. Fortunate it was that I was born where the rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant met. Therefore do I ask—will a rich man fail to attain the Lord because he is rich? will a classical scholar be denied access to the Lord because he is learned? will the Lord send away a man who has no education? The New Dispensation answers that the arms of God are outstretched for all. If you are poor it would not matter: only attract by your love all classes of men into the house of God. I should like very much to say that this inner poverty has done me immense good. With its water I put out the fire of pride. By it I drove out the vanity of wealth and learning. And by it I attained peace. From a sense of duty I go to palaces, visit wealthy people, and

conform to the habits and manners of rich families. Yet I know I am lowly, ever lowly ; poor, very poor. Though poor, I honor both the rich and the poor, and I embrace them both in love. I have remained lowly, and therein I have my joy and peace. Salvation is indeed for the poor in spirit.

Merciful God, Friend of the poor, high position in life often makes a man proud, and riches and honor upset the balance of his heart. But, my God, pride finds no place in his heart whom from his birth Thou preservest in meekness. How much did I not profit by my poor caste and the company of the poor ? How I danced madly with them and sang *sankirtans* in the streets. I reaped an abundance of harvest even in the midst of wealth and honor. If my caste had been of the rich I might have been tempted to commit big sins. If I was not attached to very common food I would have failed to know Thee, O Thou, the Refuge of the poor and the lowly ; and I would not have now sat on this pulpit. Thou knewest that if Thou madest Thy son belong to the rich caste, he would die of the heat of wealth, and so Thou didst decide that he should belong to the poor caste. Thou didst see the danger and didst know that otherwise pride and death would overtake Thy son ; and O Ocean of Mercy, Thou didst say to Thyself, I would give this child the heart of the poor, the spirit of the poor and the tastes of the poor. Born in the poor caste, I have enjoyed unnumbered delights from my childhood. The cause of all such delights was poverty. It has been to me a blessing and not a curse. I have gone through many dangers ; but they did not harm me. I have risen to a high position and shaken the hands of the opulent, but I have never felt the heat of wealth. No Bráhma has been so sorely tempted as I have been, no one so severely tried. A prince's household has entered into mine, my honor has risen high ; but I have not lost my caste. Fierce storms passed over my head, but they could not overwhelm me, for I set my heart on Thee.

I have been weaving straw mats as of old, have been plying the trade of my caste, that of hawking sugar in the streets, have been keeping the company of the meek and the lowly; and therefore have I not perished. Otherwise I would have been drowned in the sea of opulence and prosperity. I have realised the truth of the saying: "whom God preserveth, no one can destroy." My God, poverty has been my salvation. Now, abiding in Thee, I call both the rich and the poor; come thou rich man; come also thou, brother poor. I belonged to the family of the rich, they invite me and I go to them. I love the rich, I love the king and the queen, I love and honour the empress, I love and honour the learned. I no longer fear the company of the rich. When a man has been sanctified, he loses all fear. Friend of the poor, grant to all of us that quietness of the mind and poverty of the heart which belong to piety. Verily we are poor. The New Dispensation is the Dispensation for the poor. We shall walk in the streets as poor men do; we shall be the dust of the streets; we shall take straw between our teeth; and then with outstretched arms we shall get to heaven. Lord, in Thy mercy, grant us this blessing that we may all be poor in spirit and fulfil our destiny by enjoying holy heavenly joys that Thou grantest on earth.

CHAPTER XV.

THE LEARNER.

The earth is God's school for man. So long as we are in this school we shall attain God by the acquisition of knowledge and virtue. Therefore, have I never looked upon myself as a teacher ; nor shall I ever believe that I am a teacher. I came as a learner ; I live the life of a learner ; and I shall continue to be a learner for ever. The great teaching of the Sikh religion "to learn" is inherent in my blood. Day by day it has been adding strength and vigor to my life. And it has been growing stronger in my blood. I have learnt, I am learning and my earnest desire is that I may learn for ever. I learn in the morning and I learn in the middle of the day ; in prosperity I learn one chapter of the scripture, in adversity I learn another chapter. Every living thing is my preceptor, every object my teacher, and human nature teaches me many lessons. When I open my eyes I see a school, when I shut them I see a grander school. As my appetite to learn is immense, so the lessons to learn are unlimited. Various truths, the knowledge of which leads to salvation, are inscribed all around. I never felt the want of books. I never believed that the time would ever come when I shall have nothing more to learn. To learn is my business, it is my life, my joy, my salvation. I can not exhaust naming all the precious truths I have learnt ; and I know I shall learn immensely more. I have never felt that I have finished learning. Innumerable have been my teachers. I have learnt from the sky, the bird and the fish. I accepted every being and thing as my teacher.

I did not learn from a sense of duty, nor was it

for progress in religion. But my nature is suited to it ; and I delight in learning. I feel a greater delight when I receive a new truth of morality or of religion than what the discoverer of America felt when he first saw its land, or what a lover of beauty feels when he looks upon a new object of exquisite beauty. I am enraptured when I can seize a truth. I have not acquired truths by the exercise of the intellect. I have not gathered them one by one by studying different branches of knowledge. That has not been my way of learning. Truths flash across my mind as the lightening does across a dark sky. While I am doing something, or grazing at a tree, Some One brings me a truth. It unexpectedly gives a push, enters into my mind, illuminates it like an electric flash and thrills my whole life. I compare it with all old truths, and find it to be totally different from them and perfectly new. I have constantly found new truths. Directly I find a truth, joy and peace fill my heart. I have found it to my great delight that this is the way the Living Mother reveals truths to Her devoted children. Truth thus vouchsafed confers large benefits. It satisfies the intellect, beautifies life with virtue and, over and above, brings a great joy to the heart. No man engages in a profession which brings him no joy.

Shall I say that after succeeding in the acquisition of knowledge I have taken to the profession of a teacher ? Shall I say that I have passed the examinations in the required subjects, have attained proficiency in them, and have now set myself up as a teacher ? I have never for once entertained the thought that I have learnt all I have to learn from my Teacher. I never thought so when I delivered lectures in the theological school, and now that I occupy the honored pulpit of this church I never think so. I have never thought that I have finished learning and now I have only to teach. Such a thought never crossed my mind either when I learnt or when I taught. I was a learner both when I learnt and when I taught. In my practice of religion

with my companions I gather truths, and when they come to me I rejoice. It was a blessing that I came to earth ; human life is a blessing. There is more joy in learning than in teaching. The acquisition of truth is verily a source of immense joy. Truth is radically related to the soul. When I receive a new truth I feel that I have come unto the possession of a new world, that a large province of the spiritual kingdom has come into my hands.

When a musician by repeated practice of his voice with the accompaniment of an Indian or a European instrument, happens to evolve a new tune, he is rejoiced beyond measure. What delight fills the appreciative heart. Thinking that a new tune has taken its birth in his throat, that the goddess of music has revealed a new music to him, the musician is overpowered with rapture. Indeed new-found treasure brings in such delight that the heart is unable to contain it. A fisherman fishes diligently in the river and catches daily ordinary varieties of fish. He has no other delight in this, beyond that he has the reward of his labor and earns his livelihood. But if one morning, when he casts his net, he catches a fish unknown before and unheard of, his delight knows no bounds, and its thrill courses from one end of his body to the other. A painter ordinarily reproduces the color, forms, poses and expressions which he has learnt from his teachers. But, if in course of his labors he discovers a new color, a new form, pose or expression, he congratulates himself on his good fortune, and exclaims : "Blessed be my Creator ; blessed be the world." He deliberates : "How came I to discover what I never learnt ? Whence did it originate ?" And he is filled with wonder and sits still overwhelmed by emotions. An astronomer spends his life in observing planets and stars. But if that learned man of science, in searching the heavens, happens to observe a new luminary, he at once publishes to the world the incomparable joy of his heart. He considers that millions of pounds of money, or the rich throne of an emperor could not bring him

such supreme joy. When I find a new truth, I feel far greater joy and delight than this musician or fisherman, this painter or astronomer. Who would exchange, for such joy and delight, vast wealth or a vast kingdom? When by the grace of God, a new truth is revealed to me, no happiness could exceed what it brings. Therefore have I considered myself blessed that I have been endowed with the faculty of the learner. I still observe the rules which students have to observe at school.

The four Vedas have not yet been fully learnt; my learning lessons have not yet ended. The great Himalayas proclaim the height of spiritual knowledge. I find on all sides evidence that knowledge is endless; endless in general truths, and also endless in the details of every such truth. I have much more yet to learn about loving-devotion, about God-vision. I have heard from the mouth of my God many wonderful truths as to how the different scriptures may be harmonized; but much more remains to be heard. Mine is no ordinary teacher, but the Living Lord of the universe is my teacher. Therefore shall I never be in want of lessons to learn. He has continually been teaching me; and the more I learn, the humbler I be. I have learnt for forty years; but I have fully learnt nothing. I have learnt many truths about prayer, but not all truths about it. I do not yet fully know how to take the name of the Merciful God. I do not yet know the full meaning of love and all that it denotes. And therefore I cry shame to myself. And when I cry shame to myself, at once I learn a new truth. Blessed am I that I have thus learnt many truths; blessed am I that thus I am still learning new truths.

I have never set myself up as a teacher. But shall I therefore remain selfish for ever, and not pass on to others the truths that I have received? Shall I, like a miser, keep them shut up for ever in a chest? I have practised the rule "how to receive," but never followed the other "how to bestow." To bestow is not a creed of mine. But there is a law of nature that truth, that

comes in, finds a way out. Such is the character of the men of our country that, when a truth comes to one of them, it reveals itself to others. They have two doors to their house, one for ingress and the other for egress. Truth enters at one door and goes out at the other. It goes out to the world and returns two-fold to the mind. There it becomes fourfold, and again goes out and returns a hundred-fold. It grows while it stays in the mind of the learner; it grows much more when it goes out to the world. The joy which the learner feels on receiving a truth increases much more when he finds it spreading in the world.

My desire and eagerness are confined to receiving truths. I devote no thought how to bestow them on others. I never think out what I shall say; but when I preach, truths rush out un-bidden. The profession of the *Guru* is worthless. I never adopted it. I have never uttered old truths. I would not repeat this year what I said last year. I have learnt that I have not come to teach but to learn. What I learn spreads of itself.

If I repeat this year what I said last year, if I offer to-day the prayer which I offered yesterday, if I repeat yesterday's lecture I would feel that I have taken the worthless profession of the *Guru*; and that I have been trying to steal the minds of men by artificial means. I would consider that the reservoir of the truths I have learnt has dried up; and that I have been distributing mud; no, not even mud but dry dust. But the Lord be praised, I had never so to confess, so to lament. As He has been merciful to me in all other matters, so hath He been also in this. I have never had to be anxious for want of what to preach or what to write. I should be ashamed to turn yesterday into a to-day, to re-enact the past in the present, to chew the cud of old thoughts. My Teacher would be displeased if I were to do so. I had never to chew old cud, never to search in the mud.

I pay no attention to what I should bestow, what I should preach. I only pay attention to what I learn.

This habit has saved my life. If the thought comes to me that I am imparting great thoughts to others, my tongue sticks, my words fail and my body and mind shrink. With me to learn is to teach, to receive is to bestow. Power and capacity to receive truths are transmitted from me to those who hear. When a truth comes to me, it is bound to go to others. Truth published in my heart is sure to be published to all with the accompaniment of conches and bells. I have observed and found that, what I learn, India also learns ; as if birds carry the truths on their bills to all houses in the land ; as if my heart is joined to the hearts of all my brethren by channels, and the truths of my heart are conveyed through them to all hearts everywhere. If the sun of truth shines in my heart, the light illumines all other hearts. And the news comes to me that truth has travelled both to the palaces of the rich and the huts of the poor. The Lord be praised, that truth coming to one man spreads itself to hundred of thousands of men.

We shall only learn truths ; my desire is ever to learn them. I wish to learn from everybody, whoever he may be. I love to fall at the feet of a common singer and learn. When a mendicant comes to my house, I feel as if a thousand pounds have come to my hands ; and I learn much from his songs. When any man comes to me to tell me something new, I am eager to get the truth out of him. No one comes and goes away from me without leaving me some gifts. The Lord has endowed me with a power by which I can at once attract to myself the goodness of the pious. As the pious man goes away, I feel distinctly that he has left with me the excellences of his heart and that I have become somewhat like him. I am a born learner, I have been learning from my birth and I have never ceased to learn. I shall ever learn from every thing and every being. I shall learn even from the beasts not excepting the swine. And I shall pass on to the next life while engaged in learning.

Thou ever-present Teacher, many things hast Thou mercifully taught me and shewn me during this earthly life. Daily hast Thou nourished my soul with fresh truths, as Thou hast fed my body with fresh victuals. I thank Thee, Father, for such mercy. How shall I publish Thy secret dealings with me? I can not proclaim them to the world. When I sit at Thy feet I find infinite joy. The more I learn, the happier I be; When I receive a new truth I am mad with joy. I want to shout; I can not rest; and I marvel Whence does the truth come, Who bringeth it to me. My God, it is so joyous to learn new truths of Thee. Thou hast been bestowing only happiness on Thy helpless child. Did I, Mother dear, ever leave Thee to go to any other teacher? Did I ever want to join any college to complete my education, or try to enter a *tol* and come out a *pandit*? Thy feet are my inspiration; the dust of Thy feet all my wisdom. I have not gone to any other source of learning; and so hast Thou been teaching me scripture and philosophy, literature and history. Home is his theological college, whose Mother is the Goddess of learning. His Mother never forgets to teach him. Mother, make us eternal learners, and we shall learn through eternity. Why are common men so conceited? Why does the number of teachers increase? Every one is eager to teach and none to learn. Do Thou grant wisdom to man. May they know that to learn is to teach. I do no more want to go out preaching. If truths come to me, they will propagate themselves. If truths come to me no more, there will be none to go out. But if Thou makest me learned in the Infinite Vedas, then may I say that I shall never cease to receive truths and never to pass them on. I had never in my life to feel the want of truths. They come to me in heaps. I shall spend my remaining days in learning. I shall ever be, Mother dear, a pupil in Thy Vedic school. Teach, Mother, these Thy worshippers hundreds and thousands of Thy new Vedas. Bring down their pride and make them humble. So long as we live we shall observe the

rules for the student and adorn our lives with the attainment of saving truths. Do Thou in Thy mercy grant us this blessing. This is our humble prayer unto Thee.

CHAPTER XVI.

FALSEHOODS REFUTED.

Some men, who have not read the Bible of my life or not all its chapters, have made untrue allegations about me. They have thus been guilty before God and man of uttering falsehoods. It is necessary to expressly indicate these falsehoods. They came to wrong conclusions in ignorance of the special facts of my life, and were thus guilty of making untrue allegations ; and these it is necessary to refute. Who are the men guilty of falsehoods ? who are the offenders ?

This pulpit unhesitatingly calls those, to be utterers of falsehood, who place this worm of the hell in the same category with honored and revered God-sent prophets, like Jesus and Chaitanya, who have led men to holiness and helped them on to salvation. How absurd to say that I belong to the same category as they. Shall I be classed with those, the dust of whose feet I am not fit to hold on my head ? In their presence I keep standing ; they are revered by all men ; from them men have received help in their journey to heaven. I shall approach them as a sinner for my own salvation ; but I shall not occupy the same seat with them as their equal in helping men on their way to heaven. I am one of those who sit at their feet, listen to their precepts and follow their examples ; and I glory in doing so. I find peace and happiness that the invocation of their names helps me to holiness and enables me to dance with joy.

Again, this pulpit adjudges them guilty of uttering a falsehood who assert that my character is unblemished, that no sin is to be found in me, and that I am one of the

greatest of saints. It has been distinctly stated in this Bible of my life that there were many sins in me ; that dreadful guilt and stains were latent in me ; and that their roots have not been cut out. Let no one class me with saints, the recollection of whose names brings purity to a man's life. But let every one think that I am one of those men who struggle against their secret sins. As they pray for holiness, so do I. Like them too, evil and good both exist in me.

As another man, in spite of evil in him, receives truths from God and ventures to preach them to others, so do I receive truths and preach them. To be a minister does not mean to be sinless. That I am a minister does not mean that I have purified myself and am now engaged in purifying others. I have been a minister only to transmit to others the truths that I have received, to pass on to others the great thoughts that have come to me. With sins attached to me, I should be ashamed to occupy the pulpit, if it were for the purpose of conferring moral and spiritual benefits on others. But I occupy the pulpit as I am determined to give to others what I have gradually received from heaven. Though I am not fit to be classed among the saints and the prophets, not fit to sit along with pure-souled saints and holy *rishis*, nay not even fit to sit at their feet ; yet it must be admitted that I am constantly engaged in subduing my evil propensities by calling upon them, and that wisdom and holiness, peace and love constantly flow from God to me.

They, who assert that mine is not an inspired life, that I have not seen God nor heard His voice, they too utter a falsehood. It is true, as true as any Vedas, that often and often I see God and hear His voice. My life depends on such seeing and hearing. In spite of my unworthiness I have heard the manna-laden words of Heaven, and that not once or twice but hundreds and thousands of times. And the words have purified my life and made me happy. And I have seen God hundreds and thousands of times ; and such visions have cleansed

my life and increased my efforts to see Him more. Those, who admit that I see God and hear His words, speak the truth. Others, who assert that my seeing and hearing God are only hallucination and fancy and that really I have never seen God or heard His voice, them the world will sooner or later adjudge to be utterers of falsehood. As I see external objects, exactly so do I see God. And as I hear other sounds, I hear the words of Him Whom I worship as my God and love as my Friend. To see and hear God is as natural as to take food or wear clothes.

If people say that I am superior to all other men because I see God and hear Him, they also utter a falsehood. They who deny my seeing and hearing God are as much utterers of falsehood, as they who, on account of such seeing and hearing, assign me a very high place among men. To see God is not the mark of an extraordinary man, to hear Him is nothing uncommon. To see Him is like seeing outer material objects. I think as He makes me think ; I speak as He leads me to speak ; I preach as He bids me preach. My union with Him is a most natural thing. If there is any other mysterious seeing of God I have not experienced it. I have seen Him as outer objects are seen. I have heard His words as outer sounds are heard. On these points I do not differ from other *bhaktas* and *yogis*. As my seeing outer objects and hearing outer sounds are real and can not but be real, so are my seeing God and hearing His words.

If any man judges that in entering upon a work I depend on my wisdom as worldly people do, make various inquiries, gather all kinds of information, and take the counsel of knowing people, his judgment is false. They know the truth and speak the truth who say that it is the Lord Who hath appointed me to certain offices, that it is He Who revealeth truths to me, and that it is He Who manageth my household. They utter a falsehood who accuse me of being engaged with the aid of my intellect in harmonizing the various religions of

the world, and of my possessing such indomitable assiduity as to be able to move the Himalayas. Many such conclusions are being drawn regarding my life. But I am he who has a child-like faith, who is never anxious for the morrow, who gave up all worldly pursuits at the beginning of his spiritual life, who listens to no counsel of man, who takes no order from a committee of superiors in the conduct of his duties, but only looks up to Heaven and obeys the signs that come to him from the dark. This man had to meet many great dangers during the last twenty-five years of his life ; but he not only vanquished them but having received light from within, he is now bold enough to stand unflinched before such dangers. The way in which the Lord leadeth a man is clearly manifest in his life. The Lord takes the oar and pulls on, and man goes forward ; He thinks, and man has no thinking to do. If you want to know this secret of my life, read this Bible. I did not take up any stipendary service nor did I ply any trade, but the Lord hath met my expenses and still doeth so. They who call this the mark of an extraordinary man speak false. As I placed my life in the hands of God, so have hundreds and thousands of faithful and devoted men done. It is not at all an uncommon thing. Numerous examples of such lives may be read in books. There can not be the least doubt that the holy spirit of God guideth man in his life. Do not therefore say that our minister, by publishing this fact in the Bible of his life, has assigned a high place to his life. A man may be poor and ignorant, yet God, as the Merciful Mother, may lead him to the path of truth and worldly prosperity.

They too utter a falsehood who call me rich and learned. I have never considered myself rich, honored, or learned. You can not truthfully count me among the rich. I can not say that I have a penny besides my house. If men place me among the rich, they do so erroneously. They do not know the real facts and therefore class me with the rich. But they, who know the inner truth, know that I have not means enough to

be sure of the morrow's meal. But the Lord himself is my means. If I do not call myself rich I do not call myself needy either.

Those, who count me among the needy, also fall into a falsehood. He alone is needy who laments and makes himself miserable for his wants. The Lord has not placed me among the needy, has not classed me with them. If any man can be called rich without any riches, I am he. I consider earthly riches to be of no value. He, on Whom I fix my heart without any thought for the morrow, is verily my riches. Why should I take thought when I have One Who thinks for me. My riches are not in my box and in my store-house. My Father has everything. It only remains for me to ask and for Him to give. Why should a man be anxious, who has a large sum of money deposited in the Bank, and feels that the monthly income therefrom would make poverty impossible for his family?

My learning is not of this earth. I can truthfully say that I know less than an ordinary educated man of the world. Further, I have not that command of language as to express properly what I know. I did not complete my college education. I cannot bear comparison with the learned of the world. I have not what would entitle a man to call himself learned; but I am not indifferent to learning. This, however, does not mean that I do not know things about God or that I can not preach. One, Who is all-knowing, dwelleth with me, and I keep my eyes fixed on Him. I remove all my want of knowledge by hearing His words. If He, Who saveth every man from shame, helpeth me, then indeed am I not put to shame. He provideth me with all that I need for my preaching.

Whom do you call honoured? It is only as a favor that men of rank talk with me. If I have any honor, it has come from my God. My honor is His gift. I never had any worldly honor and never shall. I have received no kind of honor from men of the world. And therefore there is no fear of my losing it. As the Lord

is my riches, so He is my learning and wisdom, my honor and influence.

It will now be easy to find out who utter falsehoods about me, and who put unjust interpretations on my life. Every one ought now to desire that his life may be as mine has been. I have achieved nothing of myself. There are no riches but God ; nowhere is wisdom or peace to be found but in God ; God is All-in-All. This is the meaning and the substance of this Bible of my life.

Friend of the poor, Giver of protection, all these twenty five years of my life are a testimony unto Thee. May my life reveal only Thee to the world. So shall I be blessed. What did I do with my life ? I committed sins. And what didst Thou do ? Thou didst do everything. Thou didst save me from all perils. I had neither knowledge nor wisdom, but Thou didst teach me the science of religion. Friend of the poor, do Thou now bless this worshipper of Thine by always revealing Thyself to him. I am unable to destroy sins, but I am prepared to bear testimony to what Thou hast done in my life and art doing. Oh, my life is now a golden one. Thou hast made it a golden life. Thou hast made my heart a piece of diamond. How low I was, and how exalted hast Thou made me ! I lived an ant's life, lived in a hole, came out to take a particle of food, and returned into the hole. But Thou hast placed me on the holy pulpit of this church. How has it happened ? It has happened because Thou hast done it. He alone is happy whom Thou makest happy. He alone becomes rich, honored and wise whom Thou resolvest to make so. Let men of the world read this Bible of life, and let them ponder over it, not to praise me but to rectify their error. For, they say that God liveth now away from man ; He doth no more, as He did of old, work miracles in the life of them who are devoted to Him. May I with all my strength refute this falsehood. May the hearts of men, reading this life of a sinner and pondering over every word of it, swell up in faith on Thee and loving-devotion to Thee. Thou hast brought

me money ; Thou hast brought me wisdom ; and Thou hast brought me every other thing that I have. Do Thou now grant me this boon that my occupation of this pulpit may bring about this good result—that men may reflect how I, who was a bad man, am now what I am ; how I who had nothing, have now so much. Where was the boat of my life and where is it now ? almost near the highest heaven. Henceforth I shall say nothing but what Thou biddest me say, do nothing but what Thou biddest me do. My God, I am wholly Thine. May the reader of this Bible of my life only praise Thee ! May the world read it only to bow down unto Thee and to be intoxicated with love and loving-devotion to Thee ! Lord, grant this blessing in Thy mercy.

